NEWS / A4

3 Filipino women go for Mt. Everest summit today

BUSINESS / B1

Markets cheer poll conduct: Peso breaks into 46:$1, stocks hit 10-year high

WORLD / A28

Scathing report accuses World Bank president of breaking rules for girlfriend

ENTERTAINMENT / E1

What Annabelle, Ruffa can't say on national TV about break-up

Trillanes scores coup in Senate Magic 12

By Christine Avendaño and Norman Bordadora

ANTONIO TRILLANES IV yesterday said he was flattered by his strong showing in the quick counts being conducted by media outfits and their partners as well as

TRILLANES/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, May 16, 2007 ★★★ 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 157 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Garci: The trouble with hello is goodbye

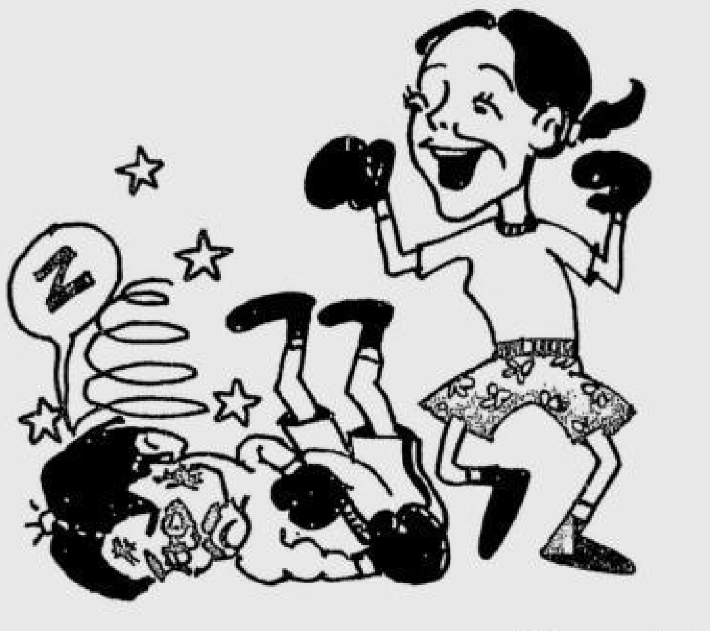
By Grace Cantal-Albasin
Inquirer Mindanao

BAUNGON, BUKIDNON—THIS TOWN WAS celebrating its fiesta yesterday, but all was quiet in the house of the former election commissioner now famously known as "Garci."

Virgilio Garcillano, who was accused of manipulating the results of the 2004 election in favor of

GARCI/ A21

Darlene 'knocks out' Pacquiao



By Aquiles Z. Zonio
Inquirer Mindanao

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—IT WAS the kind of fight where not even his world renowned American trainer, Freddie Roach, would have been much help.

As of 3 p.m. yesterday, reelectionist Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio was leading Manny Pacquiao by nearly 10,000 votes—20,818 to 11,227—with less than a quarter of total precincts accounted for, according to an unofficial tally by the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

The contest for the first congressional district of South Cotabato pitted the 130-pound terror of world boxing's superfeather weights against the 90-pound warrior who was backed by the powerful political machinery of her clan.

A political neophyte, Pacquiao had bulldozed his way into local politics relying mainly on his popularity in the ring and the ragtag machinery of former Mayor Rosalita Nuñez.

Custodio's mayoral and vice mayoral candidates were also leading in their respective races, holding a wide margin over their opponents.

As it appears, the Antoninos' Achievement with Integrity Movement could again be headed for a sweep.

DARLENE/ A21

THE GOOD FIGHTS

VILMA: Leading star in Batangas gubernatorial contest.

JDV: From a shaky start to "glorious victory" in 4th District, Pangasinan.

DATO ARROYO: Claims victory but rival counters it's too close to call in 1st District, Camarines Sur.

Padaca trails in Isabela; Robredo up in Naga

By the Inquirer Bureaus

IN HER RETURN FIGHT WITH one of the members of the Dy political clan, reelectionist Gov. Maria Gracia Cielo Padaca has found herself trailing in the gubernatorial race in the partial and unofficial count yesterday.

Results from at least seven towns and a city in Isabela showed former Gov. Benjamin Dy, a candidate of the Nationalist People's Coalition, with 59,878 votes while Padaca, of the Liberal Party, had 49,682.

In Cauayan City, the hometown of both candidates, Dy received 2,092 votes in canvassed returns from 23 precincts while

PADACA/ A11

Pulse Asia: 6-4-2 for GO

Trillanes in, Cayetano out in ABS-CBN exit poll

SIX CANDIDATES OF THE GENUINE OPPOSITION (GO), four of the administration's Team Unity (TU) and two independents would make it to the Magic 12, according to results of a nationwide exit poll conducted by Pulse Asia Inc. for ABS-CBN. *(See Table on Page A10.)*

Pulse Asia said last night that there was a statistical chance that the last four candidates on the list could be replaced by other senatorial candidates.

An exit poll, if done properly, reflects the final results of the senatorial elections because it captures the percentage of votes won by each candidate.

The exit poll targeted 10,620 voters, who were randomly selected in 79 provinces less than a day after polling precincts closed on May 14, according to Pulse Asia.

The exit poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.6 percentage points at the 95-percent confidence level.

Loren Legarda (GO) topped the field with 58.5 percent of the votes.

PULSE/ A10

No TU sweep in Visayas

By Inquirer Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—THE TEAM UNITY (TU) sweep that administration officials had predicted is not happening in the Visayan provinces which are considered strongholds of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her allies.

Early returns gathered by Church-based quick count centers in Cebu, Iloilo, Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental, Iloilo, Capiz, Antique, Leyte and Eastern Samar showed that Genuine Opposition (GO) candidates were dominating the senatorial race.

In Cebu, only half of the TU candidates were in the Top 12, despite the fact that the two top contenders in the gubernatorial race were Ms Arroyo's allies.

Francisco Pangilinan, an independent, was leading with 53,179 votes, according to the quick count by C-Cimpel, Cebu's counterpart of the National Movement

NO TU/ A10

ELEKSYON 2007

NAMFREL TALLY

2,846 out of 224,748 precincts
As of 10:36 p.m. May 15, 2007

	Senators		
1	ESCUDERO, Francis	GO	166,235
2	LEGARDA, Loren	GO	162,969
3	LACSON, Panfilo	GO	141,390
4	VILLAR, Manuel	GO	134,223
5	PANGILINAN, Francis	Ind	128,412
6	AQUINO, Benigno	GO	126,575
7	HONASAN, Gregorio	Ind	113,893
8	ANGARA, Edgardo	TU	109,361
9	TRILLANES, Antonio	GO	108,632
10	CAYETANO, Alan	GO	107,546
11	ARROYO, Joker	TU	99,401
12	PIMENTEL, Aquilino	GO	98,141
13	ZUBIRI, Miguel	TU	89,170
14	RECTO, Ralph	TU	85,786
15	PICHAY, Prospero	TU	83,342
16	ROCO, Sonia	GO	75,245
17	DEFENSOR, Michael	TU	73,444
18	OSMEÑA, John	GO	64,721
19	SOTTO, Vicente	TU	61,349
20	MONTANO, Cesar	TU	59,854

AMA TALLY

7,755 out of 308,222 precincts
As of 9:32 p.m. May 15, 2007

	Senators		
1	ESCUDERO, Francis	GO	1,353,965
2	AQUINO, Benigno	GO	1,350,082
3	LEGARDA, Loren	GO	1,266,385
4	LACSON, Panfilo	GO	1,161,836
5	VILLAR, Manuel	GO	1,114,964
6	PANGILINAN, Francis	Ind	1,106,907
7	CAYETANO, Alan	GO	953,234
8	ARROYO, Joker	TU	920,995
9	ANGARA, Edgardo	TU	866,952
10	RECTO, Ralph	TU	848,598
11	TRILLANES, Antonio	GO	843,982
12	ZUBIRI, Miguel	TU	842,931
13	HONASAN, Gregorio	Ind	841,769
14	PIMENTEL, Aquilino	GO	796,574
15	DEFENSOR, Michael	TU	783,487
16	ROCO, Sonia	GO	691,961
17	PICHAY, Prospero	TU	587,666
18	SOTTO, Vicente	TU	521,164
19	OSMEÑA, John	GO	503,291
20	COSETENG, Nikki	GO	425,451

Palace, TU bet accuse media of trending

By Cynthia D. Balana, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Juliet Labog-Javellana

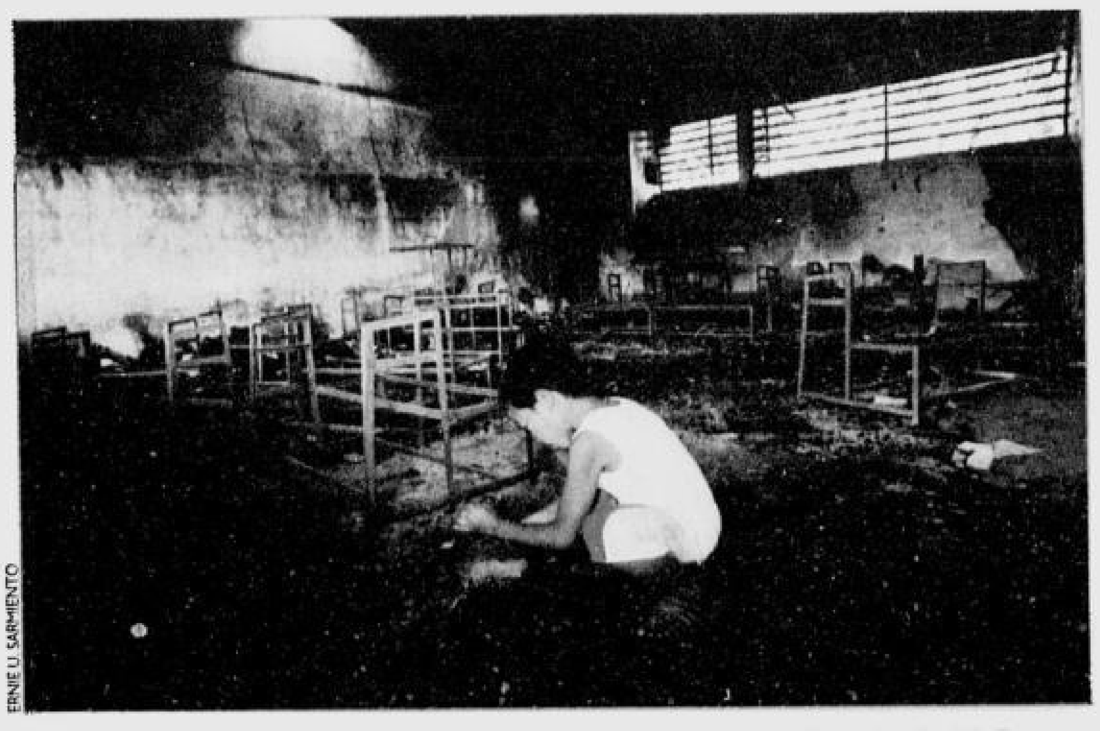
AN ADMINISTRATION SENATORIAL candidate yesterday accused major media outlets of trending, saying they were playing up the results of the voting in areas where the opposition had taken an early lead to condition the mind of the public that the opposition was leading the administration.

Prospero Pichay said the media had yet to play up his and fellow Team Unity (TU) candidates' "strong showing" in many areas throughout the country where the administration machinery had actively worked to bring in the proadministration vote.

The media's early partial and unofficial quick counts showed only two TU candidates breaking into the Magic 12. Before the elections, administration officials had said their machinery would deliver a 12-0 victory for TU in the senatorial race.

With the majority of the Genuine Op-

PALACE/ A10



ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

HEROES DIED HERE Public school teacher Nellie Banaag and poll watcher Leticia Ramos were burned to death at the Pinagbayanan Elementary School in Taysan, Batangas, when men in bonnets set the school on fire after the counting of votes on Monday. Ten others were injured.

Fr. Panlilio: 'Light of new RP politics'

By Volt Contreras

VOTERS IN PAMPANGA WHO rooted for gubernatorial candidate Fr. Eddie Panlilio obviously liked what they saw—or what they didn't see—in the gutsy Roman Catholic priest.

Behind the white habit, they didn't see any vested interests, according to political analysts and civil society leaders who yesterday marveled at Panlilio's performance in early unofficial tallies of the May 14 elections.

"They obviously saw no self-interest in (his running)," noted fellow clergyman and INQUIRER columnist Fr. Joaquin Bernas, when asked what has enabled Panlilio to hold his own against two formidable opponents in the Central Luzon province.

The priest is battling it out with incumbent Gov. Mark Lapid, son of former Pampanga governor, Sen. and now Makati City mayoral candidate Lito Lapid, and Board Member Lilia Pineda, wife of suspected

FR. PANLILIO/ A11

School set ablaze; 2 poll watchers dead

By Alcuin Papa and Nikko Dizon

THE FIVE GUNMEN WEARING bonnets sneaked in from the forested area at the back of the public elementary school in Barangay Pinagbayanan, about an hour's drive from the town of Taysan in Batangas, at 3:20 a.m. yesterday.

The men snatched ballot boxes, poured gasoline on them and set them ablaze. As fire engulfed the school, the men fired their guns before fleeing.

After the fire was put out an hour and a half later, two poll inspectors were found dead in a toilet where they had taken refuge, police said. They were identified as Nellie Banaag, a high school teacher, and Leticia Ramos, a local poll watcher. Ten others were injured in the stampede.

The two deaths in Taysan along with 17 others reported yesterday put at 147 the INQUIRER death toll in election-related violence since the campaign began on Jan. 14. The

SCHOOL/ A11

EZ2
28 30

SIX DIGIT
7 8 8 9 2 0

SUERTRES
Mid-Day 5 2 3
Evening 4 6 4
(All in exact order)

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/05/15/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Comelec to probe delisting

By Jerome Aning

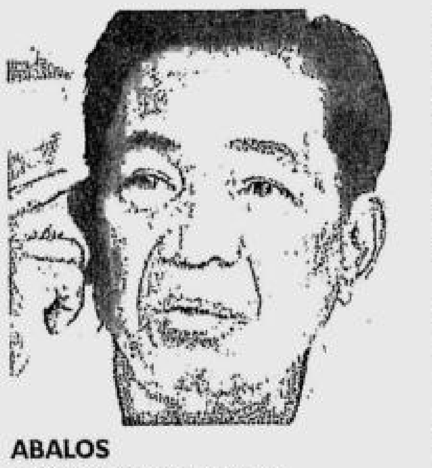
THE COMMISSION ON Elections yesterday said it would assign a committee to investigate reports of disenfranchisement of an estimated 100,000 voters in many parts of the country during Monday's election that was marred by violence and stolen ballots.

Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, who is to head the committee, said the investigation would focus on local election officials and those responsible for the registration of voters and computerization of voters' lists.

But Borra said he believed the number of those unable to vote was "minimal" and that reports about disenfranchisement may have been exaggerated by the media.

"Those who were unable to vote were so vocal. The significant complaints came from a small group which reported their plight to the media," he said.

"Most [of those who complained] were actually not disenfranchised, they simply opted not to vote after having a hard time looking for their names in the posted certified voters lists," added Commissioner Nicodemo Ferrer.



ABALOS

Ferrer, the commissioner in charge of the Eastern Visayas, Northern Mindanao and Caraga regions, observed that voters in Metro Manila and other urban areas tended to be very determined about finding their names and precincts while those in the provinces apparently gave up easily.

According to Borra, the investigation would look at how the lists were prepared at the local level up to their consolidation in the Comelec central office.

"We will look precisely for the malfunction or dysfunction in this technology-oriented system. We will quantify the disenfranchisement and make recommendations to be [incorporated] in our modernization program," Borra said.

Ferrer faulted the civil registrars for failing to report deaths of voters to election officials, citing the case of the late newspaper publisher Max Soliven who was still listed as an eligible voter in his precinct in San Juan, Metro Manila.

"In the provinces, where people are related to one another, deaths are immediately known and it's easy to spot persons voting in lieu of a dead person," he said.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said the disenfranchisement was not that massive. "Some names may have been misprinted," he said.

"We don't deny that there was disenfranchisement but the reports have to be validated whether this is just one or two cases. We will not let this go. The committee will precisely go into the reasons why this happened," he explained.

Ramon Casiple, convenor of the Bantay Eleksyon 2007, said the poll watchdog was investigating whether the confusion of voters was the result of sabotage or deliberate acts by election officials or other sinister groups.

"Many places where the cases of missing names sprouted were strongly identified with the opposition," said Casiple who was a member of the technical working groups that helped Congress draft election-related legislation.

He said his group received reports from local Comelec employees blaming the case of missing names to a high-ranking superior who personally did the computerized encoding of voters' lists in secret, assisted only by one staff member.

But he commended the Comelec for there being fewer disenfranchised voters, estimated at 100,000, this year compared to more than a million in the 2004 elections.

But he said the Comelec should not give itself a pat in the back by claiming "generally peaceful" elections.

"An election that is orderly and peaceful doesn't necessarily mean it was free and fair," he said.

Abalos claims 'vindication'

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Jerome Aning

DESPITE PROBLEMS OF DISENFRANCHISEment, violence and failure of the vote in some areas, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos still considers the just-concluded May 14 election as a vindication for the poll body.

Abalos insisted the elections, which saw 70 percent turnout among the 45 million registered voters, were generally fair and peaceful, rejecting reports of rampant irregularities.

"There have been no reported incidents of cheating, except for minor isolated incidents," he told a press briefing yesterday.

"This election has disproved the fears and allegations, before the elections, from the opposition that there would be massive cheating," he said.

The initial reports have belied such fears, Abalos said.

Apprehension

Some groups earlier expressed apprehensions that because of alleged operations to rig the elections, the polls in Mindanao were long over even before the voting.

Abalos commended all agencies involved in securing the elections for a "job well done."

"The commission is extending its thanks and appreciation [to] all the members of the military, the police and the people in general," Abalos said.

Abalos said the Comelec would schedule special elections in the 13 towns of Lanao del Sur where voting was canceled because of violence as soon as possible.

He said the nearly 100,000 votes involved could affect the outcome of the Senate race.

The Comelec commissioners, sitting as the National Board of Canvassers, will convene today to canvass the votes for senatorial candidates at the Philippine International Convention Center.

The poll body said municipal canvassing in at least eight towns had been completed.

Local winners had also been proclaimed in Sto. Tomas, Pangasinan; Sta. Maria, Romblon; Camaligan, Camarines Sur; Sebasti, Antique and in the towns of Adams, Carasi, Dumalnog and Nueva Era in Ilocos Norte.

Meanwhile, complaints about ballot-snatching and other post-election incidents of fraud mounted yesterday

Foreign observers

Foreign observers from the People's International Observers Mission (People's IOM) monitoring the polls in several Pampanga towns said they had been told that some teachers were caught carrying open ballot boxes out of polling precincts in Porac town late Monday.

"Poll watchers accosted these teachers, but the teachers smugly told them that they should lock the boxes up themselves," said Arnold Tarrabago, the team leader, in a phone interview.

The team also received unverified reports from their colleagues that armed, masked men had seized ballot boxes and dumped them in a river in Arayat town, Tarrabago said.

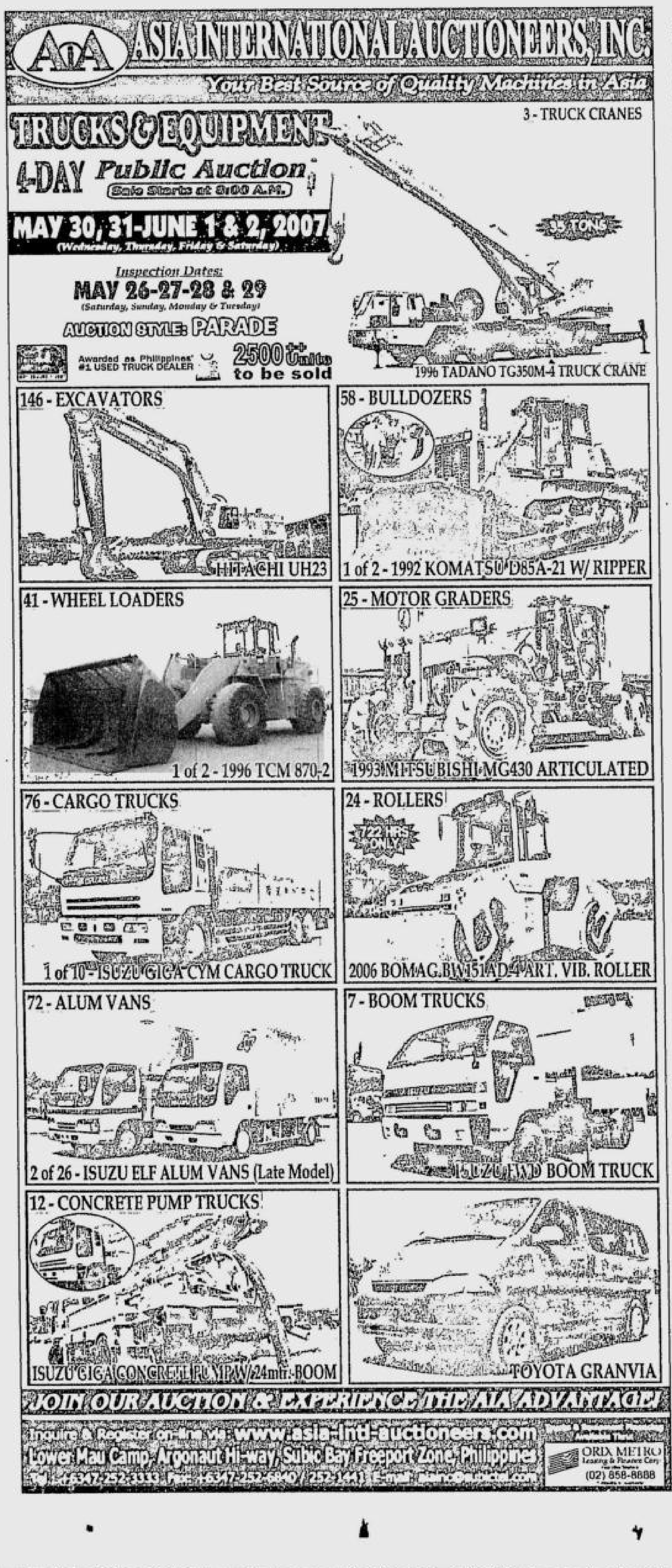
The watchdog group Kontra Daya urged the public to exercise "greater vigilance" in the next few days.

"The elections have been marred by violence, confusion and chaos. These are precisely the conditions favorable for wholesale electoral fraud," said Kontra Daya convenor Fr. Joe Dizon.

He warned other election watchdogs against prematurely absolving the Comelec and the Arroyo administration of any liability in poll fraud.

"We cannot just be giving our government agencies pats on the back. As expected, the government refuses to accept the gravity of the problems on election day. The PPCRV (Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting) and Namfrel (National Movement for Free Elections) should also be circumspect in giving the elections their seal of approval," Dizon said.

With Cyrian S. Agujo



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Satur to media: What about us?

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.,
Inquirer Southern Luzon

BAYAN MUNA REP. SATURNINO "Satur" Ocampo has asked media to include party-list votes in their unofficial and independent quick counts.

"We are deeply concerned over the lack of information on the party-list elections. Such a situation serves the purposes of those who seek to subvert the party-list system and deny victory for winning party-list groups," Ocampo, House deputy minority leader and Bayan Muna president, said in a statement.

He said public interest had been generated by media reports over the party-list race prior to the May 14 elections, referring to the harassment of left-leaning party-list groups and the fielding of pro-Malacañang groups.

"I urge colleagues in the media to give due importance to party-list representatives who are elected nationally," said Ocampo, a former business editor of the pre-martial law Manila Times and former vice president of the National Press Club.

He cited the absence of unofficial counts of party-list votes in the competing coverage of two major media networks.

"More than 18 hours after the polls closed, the media had yet to report on the votes cast for any and all party-list groups," he lamented.

"Even the Namfrel (National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections) ignored the party-list race, leaving the public blind," Ocampo added.

He urged media groups to reconsider the seeming exclusion of the party-list race in their coverage plans.

"The underrepresented and marginalized sectors which the party-list system hopes to represent must be provided timely and accurate information," he stressed.

OCAMPO: Deeply concerned over lack of information on party-list counting.

EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

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EVEREST EXPEDITION

3 Pinays go for it today

By Alcuin Papa

IF ALL GOES WELL, A PHILIPPINE team composed of three women is set to reach the summit of Mt. Everest (8,848 meters or 29,028 feet high) from the North Side today or in the next few days at the latest.

A report on mounteverest.net said Janet Belarmino, Carina Dayondon and Noelle Wenceslao had set a summit date for today, May 16, since weather forecasts predicted slower winds—around 40 kilometers per hour—at the summit.

On Sunday, the team moved to Advanced Base Camp where they were expected yesterday in preparation for their summit push.

The North route begins in Tibet. The Base Camp at Rongbuk Glacier is 5,180 meters, or some 17,000 feet, above sea level.

Camp 2 is at 6,100 meters or around 20,000 feet.

Camp 3, otherwise known as Advanced Base Camp, is below the North Col at 6,500 meters or 21,300 feet.

To get to Camp 4, or the North Col, at 7,010 meters or 23,000 feet, climbers must use fixed ropes to ascend. From the North Col, climbers must get past the rocky north ridge to Camp 5 at around 7,775 meters or 25,500 feet.

It is from Camp 6 at 8,230 meters or 27,000 feet that the climbers will make their final push for the summit.

The Filipino women aim to summit Everest, the highest mountain in the world, from the North Side in China then come down through the South Side in Nepal. They are expected to reach the South Side's Base Camp on May 18.

The team was supposed to push for the summit on May 12 but bad weather forced them to reset to May 16.

If they succeed, they will be the first women to traverse Everest from the North Side to the South Side.

A prominent member of the Everest mountaineering community, however, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the latest word from the Philippine team was that the plan to traverse Everest will not push through.

"You never know what will happen up there. It really depends on the situation, the physical condition of the girls and technical matters. As mountaineers, they will have to adapt to the conditions and the weather but take their safety as the primary consideration," the mountaineer said.

During their climb, Wenceslao was reported to have exhibited symptoms of acute mountain sickness but she has apparently recovered.

Mounteverest.net also reported that treks via the North Side had been started by Englishman David Tait, Japanese Ken Noguchi and six others.

At roughly the same time last year, Philippine Everest team members Leo Oracion and Pastor Emata summited Everest from the South side. Romy Garduce also reached the summit.

Another mountaineer, Dale Abenojar, claimed he reached the summit from the North Side ahead of the others, but his feat was disputed.

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Comelec to probe Lanao's recurring failure of elections

By Nikko Dizon

SARMIENTO

COMELEC CHAIR RENE SARMIENTO YESterday said he would call for an investigation into the recurrent failure of elections in Lanao del Sur, one of the six provinces of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Special elections

"I think this truly has to stop, there has to be a dawn of a new era in Lanao del Sur," Sarmiento said.

Sarmiento said special elections would have to be scheduled at the soonest possible time in the 13 municipalities in Lanao del Sur where the voting was postponed last Monday because of threats of violence.

Sarmiento, the commissioner in charge of ARMM, said he would most likely be flying to the province to personally oversee the preparations for the special elections.

He said military troops may need to be deployed in the province's towns, in addition to the security forces already assigned to poll duty.

Proper, appropriate

Sarmiento said he has not been remiss in his duties as commissioner in charge of the ARMM. He said he has reshuffled the election officers implicated in fraud in the 2004 presidential elections, trained the Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs), and requested for the augmentation of security forces.

"I was told about the incidents in Lanao del Sur, that's why I've been instructing our Comelec personnel to do their best. I've been encouraging [ARMM election officer] Rey Sumalipao to do his best, to do what is proper and appropriate," Sarmiento said.

"But still, we have this failure of elections," he said.

Sarmiento said he might again need to reshuffle the election officers by appointing those "who are determined to push through with the holding of the elections."

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Blasts halt counting

COTABATO CITY—THE CANvassing in nearby Sultan Kudarat town in Shariff Kabunsuan province was temporarily halted late Monday night when two motorcycle-riding men fired three rocket-grenades at the municipal hall.

Supt. Danilo Bacas, spokesperson of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) police, said two village officials were injured when the grenades, fired 30-minutes apart starting 10:30 p.m., exploded outside the town hall where the canvassing of election returns was being held.

Maj. Randolph Cabangbang, spokesperson of the Eastern Mindanao command based in Davao City, identified the injured officials as Lating Lumenda and Marco Mlok, both of Nalinan village. Both suffered wounds in their right foot and were rushed to the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center in Cotabato City for treatment.

Bacas said the canvassing resumed after they deployed more policemen in and around the municipal hall building.

Earlier in the day, one person was wounded when an improvised explosive device also went off by the roadside in Crossing Simuay, also in Sultan Kudarat town. *Charlie Señase, Edwin Fernandez and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

It's all quiet in the Palace

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE DAY AFTER THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS IT WAS all quiet in Malacañang.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had no public engagement in or out of the Palace.

Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio said the President was "not nervous" about the results of the elections.

He said Ms Arroyo was monitoring the canvassing of the results, the situation around the country, and mediating disputes between competing administration candidates.

"There are so many people calling her, [giving her] reports from the field and some are making complaints," Claudio said.

He said one of the problems besetting the administration was the contest between Lakas-CMD and Kampi candidates who ran for the same positions in many areas.

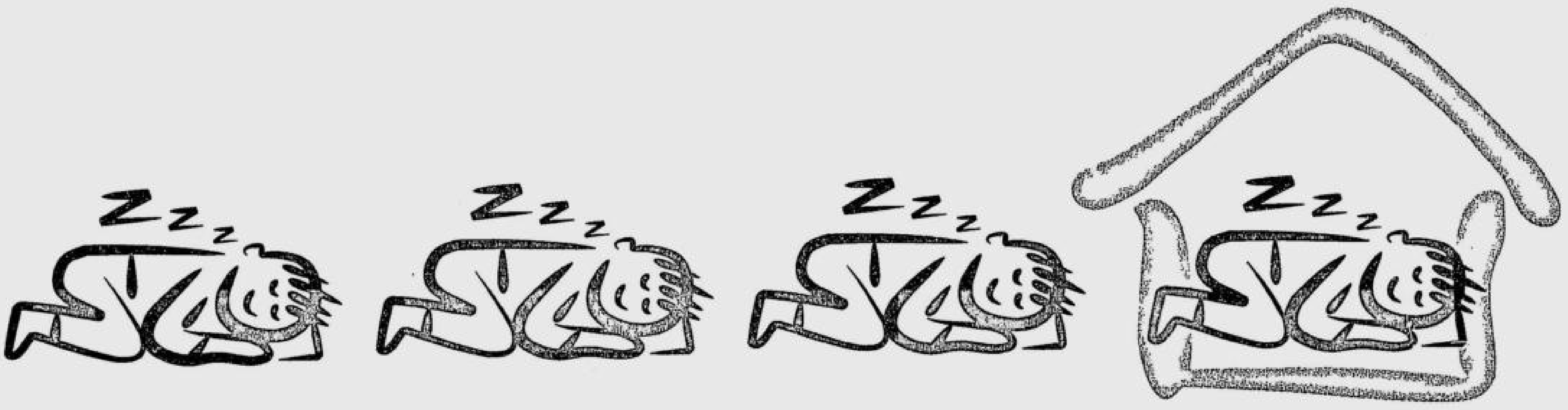
"One of the things that perhaps made the TU campaign difficult to some extent is the infighting among local candidates belonging to the administration," Claudio said.

"One of the biggest distractions within the local machinery that would have otherwise delivered a better result for TU was the intramural [competition between the administration candidates]," he said.

Claudio said that while the TU candidates were apprehensive about the media quick counts which showed the opposition dominating the results, the President was confident.

"I don't think the President is the nervous type," he said.

"She's OK. Unlike most of us, unlike the candidates, unlike the politicians, she looks at the elections from a higher plane. That is why her first statement after the close of voting was a call for unity," Claudio said.



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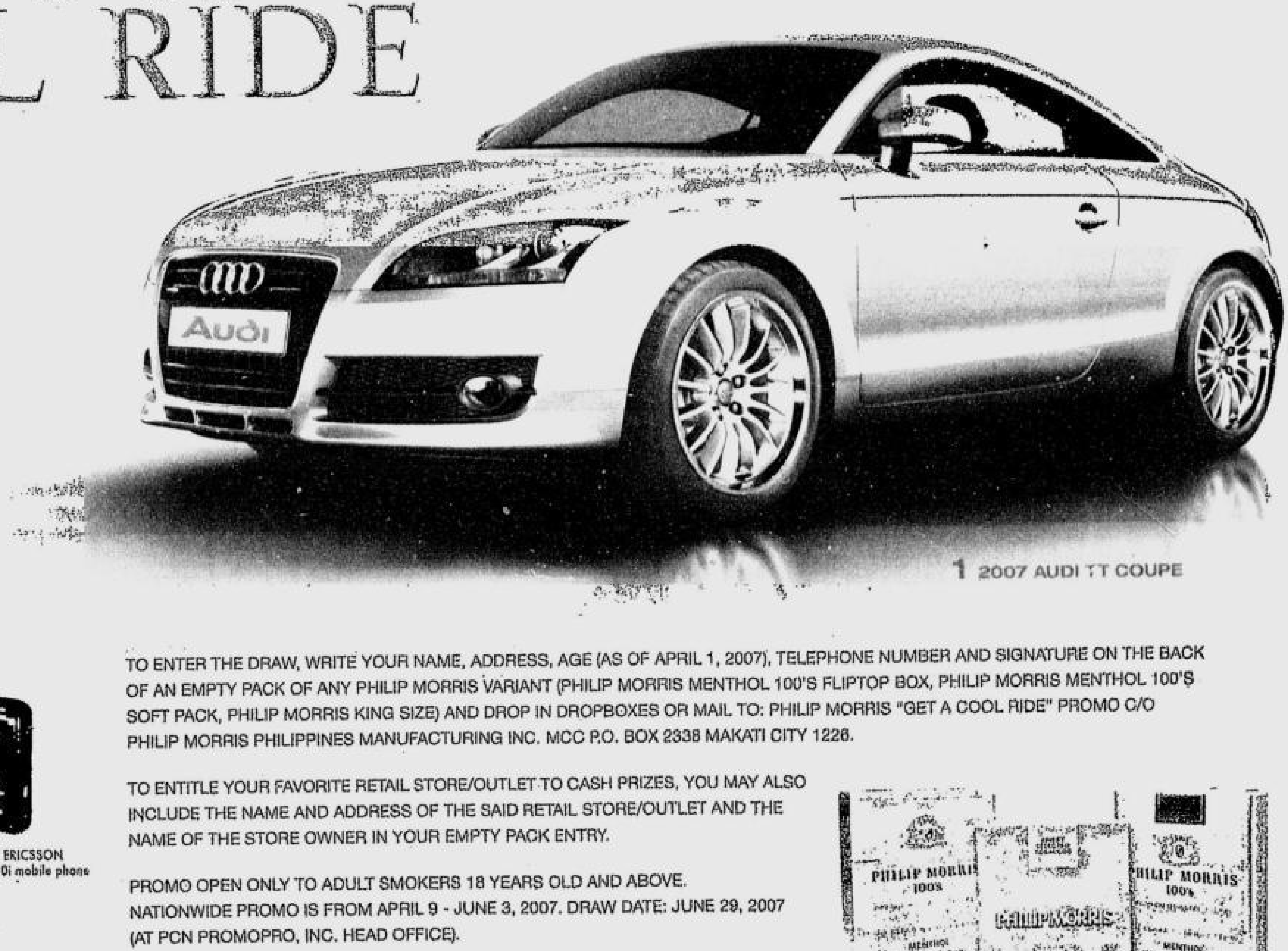

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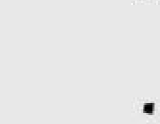

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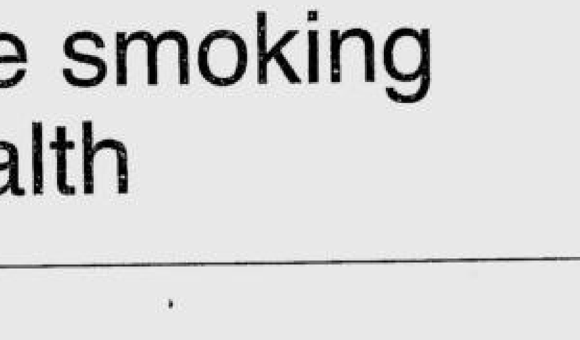

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By Leila B. Salaverria and Norman Bordadora

ALAN CAYETANO

ACCUSING THE COMMISSION on Elections of deliberately confusing the electorate, Genuine Opposition senatorial candidate Alan Peter Cayetano yesterday went to the Supreme Court and asked it to declare Joselito "Peter" Cayetano's first disqualification on March 27 as final.

He also asked the high tribunal to nullify the Comelec's May 10 resolution that said Joselito had appealed his March 27 disqualification in a timely manner.

Cayetano said the May 10 resolution was contrary to Comelec Resolution No. 7800, which states that motions for reconsideration should be filed within three days after the resolution was issued.

Final and executory

Since Joselito appealed the March 27 ruling on April 2—or six days later—Cayetano said the ruling was final and executory.

"Such being the case, respondent Joselito, legally, was no longer a candidate for senator on the day of the elections on 14 May 2007," Cayetano said in his petition.

He said that since the May 10 resolution was erroneous, the Comelec's subsequent May 11 resolution upholding Joselito's disqualification could not be made the basis for the poll body's memorandum which stated that Joselito was still a candidate and votes written as "Cayetano" only should be considered stray votes.

"It cannot be the foundation of either any right in favor of respondent Joselito or of any subsequent action of respondent Comelec, such as the issuance of the memorandum directing that 'Cayetano' votes be regarded as stray," he said.

Prelude to dagdag-bawas

He said Joselito's disqualification appeared to be a prelude to *dagdag-bawas* (vote-padding and -shaving) operations against him).

He said his sources in the Comelec told him *dagdag-bawas* operators wanted to first get rid of the "Cayetano" votes before shaving the "Alan Cayetano" votes from his tally.

"First, they made it appear it was okay for the people to vote 'Cayetano' only. The following day, the (Comelec's) legal department released a directive telling (boards of election inspectors) to consider 'Cayetano' votes stray," he said.

Cayetano said the Comelec's May 11 decision disqualifying Joselito as a nuisance candidate failed to make clear if the generic "Cayetano" votes would be credited in his favor.

"It was right for the media to assume this to be so; there was no other logical conclusion," he said.

Fighting for vote

Cayetano said he was asking the Supreme Court to disqualify Joselito with finality on behalf of the people who voted for him.

"(This is) to show each and every Filipino who voted for me that I will fight for their vote. Election fraud is the mother of corruption in the country and we have to fight for clean, honest and credible elections even if we have already won," Cayetano said.

He said he felt humbled because even with the "Cayetano" votes having been declared stray, he still got enough votes to place him in the top 12 senatorial candidates in the quick counts and his own camp's monitoring.

"Praise God that despite the Cayetano votes being considered stray we still have enough votes (to put us in the winning circle). I am so humbled," he said.

He said that even if he would not be able to recover the "Cayetano" votes that were considered stray, he was questioning the Comelec's decisions to highlight its errors.

"Indeed, respondent Comelec has the burden of proving to the Court and to the public that it has not created more nuisance and damage or prejudice in the 14 May 2007 elections than what respondent Joselito has done with his sham candidacy," he said.

Ballots in a handbag

BAUANG, LA UNION—COUNTING of votes in one precinct in this town was stopped for almost an hour Monday after a poll watcher spotted some counted ballots stuffed inside the handbag of a member of the Board of Election Inspectors.

A watcher of mayoral candidate Reynaldo Dulay reported to a Commission of Elections officer at about 5 p.m. that he found at least 20 ballots in the handbag of Cherry Collado, a BEI member, at Precinct No. 130-A in Barangay Paringao.

Collado said she did not intend to keep the ballots, claiming she accidentally put her bag on top of them.

Dulay's watcher, however, said the ballots were in the bag's pocket.

After a meeting with all canvassers and watchers, counting was resumed at about 6 p.m.

The Comelec officer advised protesters to file a formal complaint before the Comelec and the police. *Hanna Lacsamana, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, May 16, 2007
6th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 17:15, 22-18:1
Gospel: John 16:12-15

Jesus said to his disciples, "I still have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. When he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into the whole truth.

"He has nothing to say of himself but he will speak of what he hears, and he will tell you of the things to come. He will take what is mine and make it known to you; in doing this, he will glorify me. All that the Father has is mine; because of this I have just told you, that the Spirit will take what is mine and make it known to you."

Commentary

Paul preaches in Athens and uses their culture/beliefs in the Unknown God to speak about the God who creates all life and gives breath to all. He also speaks about the one who is the judge of the world who has been raised from the dead. Only a few become believers, the others want to talk about these things further, and Paul goes from there to Corinth. Why do only a few believe? Perhaps where we begin to preach is important—not from creation nor philosophical realities, but the Word of the Lord that truly converts.

Jesus has more to tell us, but we cannot bear it. The gift of the Spirit of Truth will guide us always and help us to believe and teach others to believe. We must make sure that we are not teaching our own words, but teaching only what the Spirit announces and what Jesus has preached when he was sent to us from the Father.

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Election forms stolen; are voided

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THIRTY-SEVEN SETS OF RESERVED canvassing forms—including town-level and overseas certificates of canvass for national posts—were discovered missing on election day from the storage warehouse of the Commission on Elections.

There were allegations that the blank certificates of canvass and statements of votes had been sold in the provinces to cheat in the elections but Abalos said yesterday there was no reason for alarm.

"These [missing forms] can no longer be used. They are nullified and voided," he told reporters yesterday in a press conference.

He said that if there was really a plan to use the missing forms to cheat, it would never materialize.

"These forms are already void, invalidated," Abalos stressed.

In case the missing forms surface during canvassing, already filled up, these returns would also be nullified, he added.

The bigger worry for the poll body, however, is the possibility that the theft was an inside job, that some people in the agency could be involved.

The poll body rents a storage room on the fourth floor of the Maxilite Building in Paco, Manila. It is secured round the clock by 15 guards and policemen from the Special Action Force.

There are only four people authorized to open the door, according to a police report on the alleged theft.

"There were no signs of forcible entry. The bundles were neatly torn," Commissioner Romeo Brawner said.

"We are conducting an investigation to determine how these forms had been taken out," Abalos said. "We may have the best security but if it is an inside job, it is not a lapse in security."

Brawner faxed the serial numbers of the missing forms to election officers all over the country, informing them that all of these have been nullified.

"Immediately, we sent to the field a resolution declaring these forms null and void," he said.

The missing forms are all reserved forms printed for contingency purposes.

"For example, if a certain town lacks canvassing forms, we will send them these forms if needed," Brawner explained.

The following canvassing forms were reported stolen, based on the inventory prepared by allocation committee Statistician IV Vergil Juan Soriano, who discovered the alleged break-in:

- Four sets of city or municipal certificates of canvass for national positions (to be used in municipal canvassing, to be forwarded to the provincial board of canvassers);
- Seventeen sets of Overseas Absentee Voting Form 21 or certificates of canvass also for national positions;
- Eleven copies of certificates of canvass for local posts; three sets of summary of statement of votes forms and two sets of precinct-level statement of votes forms.

P1M in jewelry seized at Naia 2

By Tarra Quismundo

ABOUT P1-MILLION WORTH OF UNDEclared jewelry were seized Monday night from a US-bound passenger at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Centennial Terminal.

Aviation authorities took custody of 35-year-old Ma. Victoria Real Padayhag, a Quezon City resident, when her luggage yielded an assortment of jewelry during a security check at the pre-departure area of the Naia Terminal 2.

Padayhag was held for "attempting to spirit out of the country assorted jewelries" that were not declared before customs officials, a requirement for such valuables to be brought out of the country, the BOC-Naia said in a report.

The 3.5-kilo jewelry stash included pearl necklaces and earrings, among others, stuffed in four steel tubes wrapped in masking tape. Other pieces were stuffed into the waistband of a pair of trousers, said BOC investigators, Angelito Navarro and Peter Castillo in a report.

A passenger must secure an export permit from the BOC to bring this much jewelry out of the country, the official said.

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ELECTION DAY BLACKOUTS

23 incidents of power outages reported

By Abigail L. Ho

DESPITE ASSURANCES THERE WOULD BE no power outages on Election Day and on succeeding days, incidents of blackouts were reported all over the country.

Task Force Halalan, the interagency team in charge of all electricity-related matters during the elections, said 23 incidents of power outages were reported from May 12 to 14 in Luzon alone.

The group dismissed these as "minor" cases, however, and were "not caused by any deliberate human intervention."

"They occurred mostly on the load side caused by strain on the electrical system in a given establishment," the group said.

For brownouts taking place within the franchise area of the Manila Electric Co., the group said the distribution utility was able to immediately address the problem.

Tripping

"Most of the tripping we experienced in our franchise area was due to natural and unavoidable causes such as kite strings getting entangled with our lines and tree branches and animals coming in contact with our facilities," said Meralco assistant vice president for energy management Nixon Hao.

He added that instances of power outage due to equipment failure were kept to a minimum.

In the Luzon provinces, Task Force Halalan said the National Electrification Administration was also able to address all the short-term line tripping that took place Monday.

The group stressed that the line tripping mostly lasted only a few seconds.

The Mindanao grid experienced some transmission line constraints some time during May 14, but these were also addressed.

Some "minor" incidents were also reported within the off-grid and missionary areas being served by the National Power Corp.'s Small Power Utilities Group—some of which were immediately addressed and some of which remain unresolved.

The unresolved cases, the group assured, would not have any impact on the conduct of the canvassing in affected areas.

Minor incidents

"Except for a few minor incidents that can be described at best as isolated ones, and at worst force majeure situations, none of which were election-related, the elections were conducted continuously and without any interruptions that can be attributed to loss of electricity service from generation to transmission," the group said.

Task Force Halalan is committed to continue monitoring the power situation in the country until the last vote has been counted.

Members of the group, headed by the Department of Energy, include Napocor, NEA, Meralco, National Transmission Corp., Philippine National Oil Co. Energy Development Corp., Philippine Electricity Market Corp., and the Philippine Electric Power Plant Operators Association.

Lumban town hall barricaded

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—The local elections officer in Lumban, Laguna, temporarily deferred the canvassing of votes in the town after supporters of a mayoral candidate barricaded the municipal hall early yesterday morning.

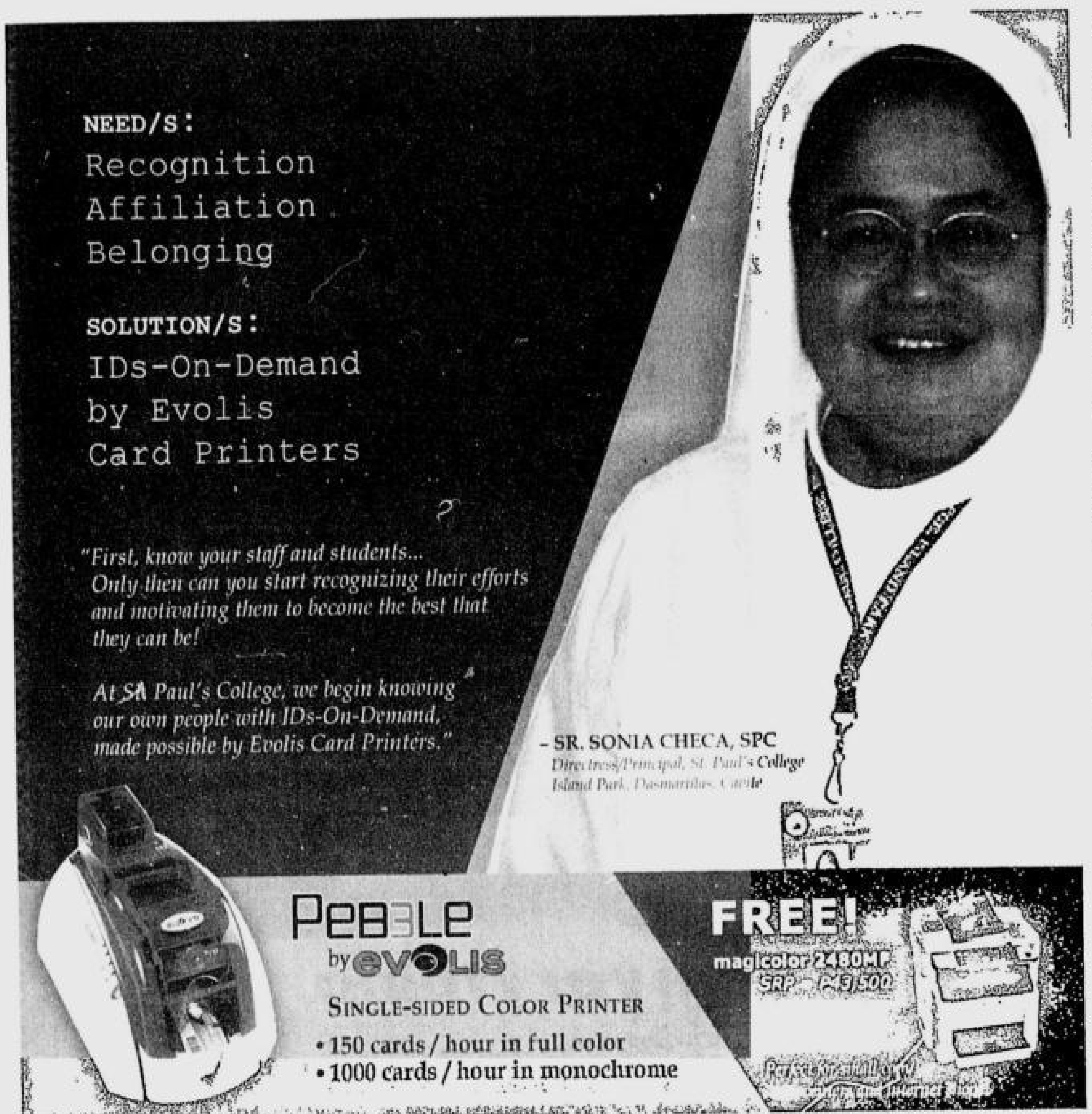
Lumban police chief Jaylet Castillejos said supporters of mayoral candidate Virgilio Lizo surrounded the municipal building at around 1 a.m. and charged the local board of election inspectors (BEI) of crediting the votes for Lizo (Lakas-CMD) to reelectionist Mayor Wifredo Paraiso (Liberal Party).

"But they (protesters) could not prove their allegations," Castillejos told the INQUIRER over the phone.

Because of the commotion, local elections officer Graciano Samela Jr. decided to temporarily stop the canvassing of votes.

Castillejos quoted the elections officer as telling supporters of both camps that the canvassing would resume once they cool down and "respect the ongoing electoral process."

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon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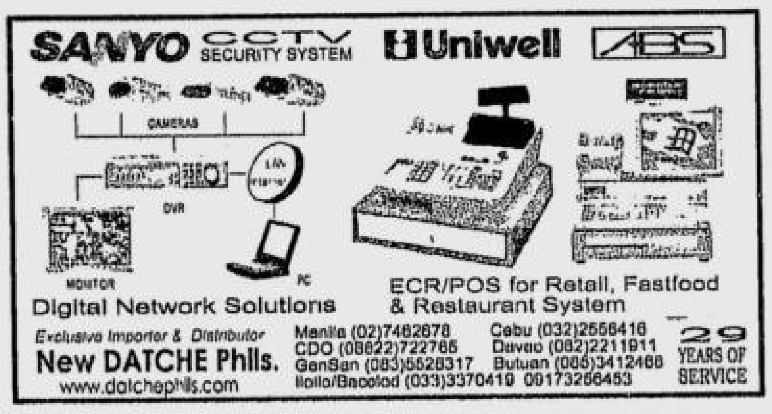
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Absentee voter turnout only 15.5% – DFA

By Cynthia D. Balana

DESPITE THE DISMAL turnout in the absentee voting exercise, the Department of Foreign Affairs said there was no failure of the absentee vote.

Only 78,360 out of the 504,110 overseas Filipinos who registered for the May 14 election, or 15.5 percent, actually voted.

But Ambassador Generoso Calonge, vice' chair of the Overseas Absentee Voting Secretariat, said the fact that more than half a million overseas Filipinos registered for the poll exercise was already a success.

"The election is composed of two things, registration and actual voting. The fact that 504,110 availed of the privilege to register is a big accomplishment..they may have not chosen to exercise that [voting] right but they signified their intention to vote," Calonge said.

Calonge and DFA spokesperson Claro Cristobal both said that it was "mission accomplished" as far as the DFA was concerned.

"The mission of government is to provide the opportunity. Like in a highway, even if there is no car passing, you provide the opportunity for a better environment for driving," Calonge said.

Cristobal said the foreign office was not remiss in its duty to inform Filipinos abroad about the elections as well as the national candidates running for public office.

Calonge said that all 88 Philippine foreign diplomatic posts took part in the information campaign to increase voters' awareness of the candidates for senators and party-list representation.

In the first OAV exercise in 2004, a total of 233,092, or 65 percent, of the 359,297 who registered for the exercise voted.

Colange said the low turnout this year may have been due to the high mobility of overseas Filipinos, particularly workers, who transfer from one employment to another and from one country to another.

A total of 51,246 cast their ballots personally, 23,754 voted by mail, and 3,360 through modified voting by mail.

The OAVS report showed that voters' participation through personal voting was highest in these five areas: Hong Kong, 19,185; Riyadh, 7,519; Jeddah, 5,041; Al Khobar, 3,902; and Kuwait, 2,395.

Voting by mail was highest in the following: Singapore, 5,527; Brunei, 2,702; Taiwan, 1,803; San Francisco, 1,190; and Tokyo, 1,139.

The bulk of the voters were contract and domestic workers while the rest were permanent residents and dual citizens.

Cristobal said the action now shifts from questions about the voters' turnout to actual results of the count which only the Commission on Elections was authorized to release.

Colange said the results of the overseas absentee voting count may be known in three to four days.

Comelec explains dismal turnout

By Jerome Aning and Aaron John del Rosario

COMMISSION ON Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday blamed the low turnout in the overseas absentee voting to the fact that this year's elections is not a presidential race.

"Voters are not interested in voting because we're not having a presidential elections," Abalos said in a press conference.

This was also the observation made by Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis.

Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr., in charge of the OAV, added that many voters abroad were not aware of the personalities vying for the 12 senate seats.

20%turnout

The dismal number of overseas Filipinos mailing their ballots or voting personally in Philippine embassies and consulates in the past month has caused Comelec and the Department of Foreign Affairs to reduce its turnout target from 65 percent in the 2004 presidential elections to about 20 percent this year.

Tuason said Comelec is hoping the respondent could reach up to 20 percent. There are about 504,000 voters but Tuason estimated that a fifth of these could have returned home or transferred to another country.

The commissioner said the first certificates of canvass for the OAV were expected to come last night in time for today's convening of the Comelec en banc as the national board of canvassers.

Voting by mail

Tuason said Comelec would continue looking for ways to refine and improve the OAV system, which is designed to give overseas Filipinos abroad more voice in the Philippine government.

This year, voting in most countries is by mail. Tuason said that with the adoption of the Automated Elections Systems Act, casting of ballots could soon be done electronically or via Internet.

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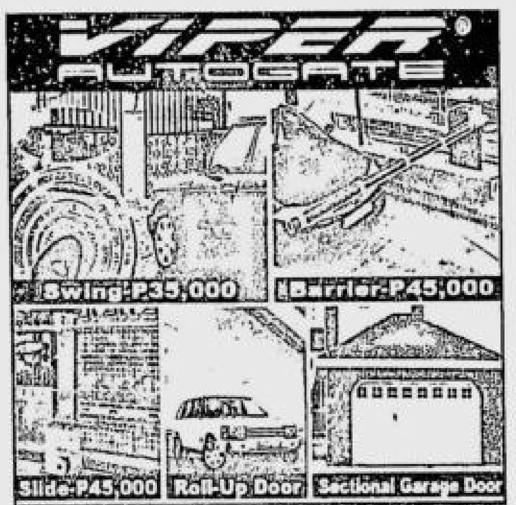

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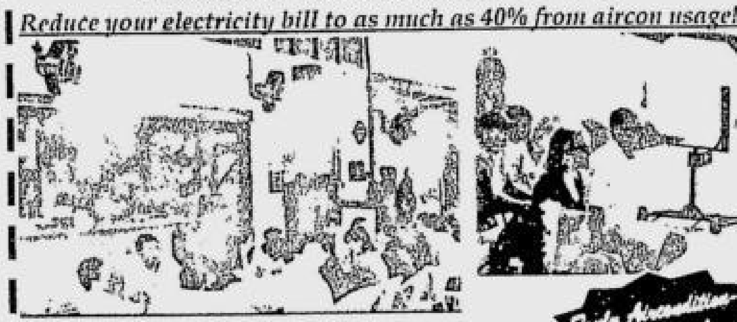

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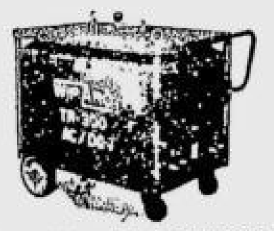

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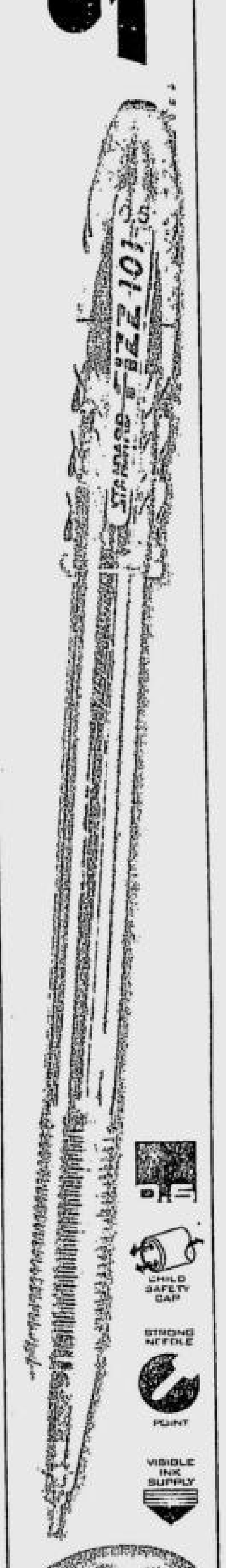

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HARD DAY'S NIGHT: Teachers who comprise the board of election inspectors bring ballot boxes and election returns from their respective precincts to the Makati City coliseum to start the canvassing of votes. RODEL ROTONI

NO REST FOR THE WEARY as this canvasser still has to do her job at the Makati coliseum. EDWIN BACASMAS

ABS-CBN/Pulse Asia exit poll

Rank	Senator		%
1	LEGARDA, Loren	GO	58.5
2	ESCUDERO, Francis	GO	53.3
3	VILLAR, Manuel	GO	49.8
4-5	LACSON, Panfilo	GO	46.4
4-6	PANGILINAN, Francis	Ind	44.6
5-7	AQUINO, Benigno	GO	42.6
6-7	ANGARA, Edgardo	TU	41.1
8-11	ARROYO, Joker	TU	36.8
8-12	TRILLANES, Antonio	GO	35.4
8-12	ZUBIRI, Miguel	TU	34.9
8-12	HONASAN, Gregorio	Ind	34.6
9-12	RECTO, Ralph	TU	34.3
13-14	CAYETANO, Alan	GO	31
13-17	PICHAY, Prospero	TU	30.4
14-17	PIMENTEL, Aquilino	GO	28.5
14-17	ROCO, Sonia	GO	28.4
14-18	DEFENSOR, Michael	TU	28.2
14-18	SOTTO, Vicente	TU	26.2

Pulse Asia: 6-4-2 for GO

From page A1

The other GO candidates who made it to the winning circle were Francis Escudero (2nd), Manuel Villar (3rd), Panfilo Lacson (4th to 5th), Benigno Aquino III (5th to 7th), and Antonio Trillanes IV (8th to 12th).

The TU candidates were Edgardo Angara (6th to 7th), Joker Arroyo (8th to 11th), Juan Miguel Zubiri (8th to 12th), and Ralph Recto (9th to 12th).

Independent candidates Francis Pangilinan and Gringo Honasan were in 4th to 6th and 8th to 12th places, respectively.

Namfrel count

On the first day of the quick count jointly conducted by the National Secretariat of Social Action and the National Movement for Free Elections, GO senatorial candidates led, reflecting the 8-2-2 scorecard earlier tallied in other unofficial quick counts.

As of 10:36 p.m. yesterday, Escudero, Legarda, Lacson, Villar, Pangilinan and Aquino occupied the top six slots. (*See Table on front page.*)

Completing the Magic 12 were Honasan, Angara, Trillanes, Alan Peter Cayetano, Arroyo and Aquilino Pimentel III.

Namfrel released four reports yesterday.

So far, it had covered election returns from 2,846 out of the 224,748 (clustered) precincts all over the country. The Comelec established a total of 308,222 precincts for the May 14 elections.

Election returns included in the tabulation came from all regions of the country. Namfrel has yet to receive a report involving the overseas absentee vote.

AMA count

In the AMA Quick Count for "Eleksyon 2007," it was 7-4-1 for GO as of 9:32 last night. (*See Table on front page.*)

The AMA count at the time covered 7,755 precincts.

The GO candidates in the winning circle were Escudero, Aquino, Legarda, Lacson, Villar, Cayetano and Trillanes.

The TU candidates were Arroyo, Angara, Recto and Zubiri.

Only one independent, Pangilinan, made it to the Magic 12.

Interviewed at home

Pulse Asia started conducting its exit poll soon after voters finished casting their votes and returned to their homes, according to ABS-CBN Interactive.

Pulse Asia executive director Ana Tabunda said Pulse Asia had chosen 15 respondents per precinct in urban districts and 12 respondents per precinct in rural districts.

"Once a house is randomly chosen, the interviewer randomly selects a voter. Indelible ink on the voter's finger will indicate that he or she had voted. If he or she is registered and did not vote, the interview would still push through," ABS-CBN reported on its website yesterday.

The website said that once a voter was selected, he onshe was given a form similar to a printed ballot of the Commission on Elections.

The respondent was then instructed by the interviewer to fill in the names that he or she wrote in the polling booth. The voter would then fold the form and drop it in a sealed box.

Tabunda said Pulse Asia deployed 1,000 field interviewers to conduct the exit polls. All field interviews were finished by 9 p.m. on Election Day.

Regions for Legarda

In the Namfrel count, Legarda placed first in tabulations from Metro Manila, Regions 1, 2, 7, 12 and the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Escudero led in Regions 4, 5, 8, 9,10, 11 and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Pangilinan, as of the final report released last night, was leading in Region 6 and Caraga, while Angara was No. 1 in Central Luzon.

Four TU candidates, including Zubiri, Recto, Prospero Pichay and Michael Defensor, were outside the winning circle.

GO's Sonia Roco and John Osmeña placed 17th and 18th, respectively. TU's Vicente Sotto and Cesar Montano occupied the 19th and 20th places.

Namfrel's initial figures yesterday were culled from precincts in Ilocos Norte, La Union, Pangasinan, Cagayan, Kalinga, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, Batangas, Laguna, Marinduque, Quezon, Rizal, Albay and Catanduanes in Luzon;

Iloilo, Negros Oriental, Leyte, Samar and Southern Leyte in the Visayas;

Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Bukidnon, Lanao del Norte, Misamis Occidental, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, North and South Cotabato, Maguindanao, Agusan del Norte and Agusan del Sur in Mindanao.

In Metro Manila, Nassa-Namfrel included reports from 71 precincts from Mandaluyong City and 18 from Muntinlupa City. *With a report from Cathy Yamsuan*

Palace unhappy with media reports on quick counts

From page A1

position (GO) candidates leading in the Senate race quick count, Malacañang sounded a call for national unity.

"We owe it to our country and to ourselves to unite and work together," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo and her administration would "support those who have been democratically elected and leave the passions and divisions of the campaign behind us."

Widespread dissatisfaction

Sen. Richard Gordon said the poor showing of TU senatorial candidates in Metro Manila and other parts of the country in the unofficial quick counts showed the "widespread dissatisfaction" of the urban voters with the President.

"People (in Metro Manila) feel that the 'Hello Garci' issue has not been resolved and the economic gains have not filtered down to the poor," Gordon said in an interview with the Inquirer.

The "Hello Garci" issue refers to the tapped phone conversations between Ms Arroyo and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in which they allegedly talked about rigging the 2004 presidential election in her favor.

Shift in provinces

"Obviously there is resentment against this administration. The people are not satisfied. They are impatient, they want change, that is why you have (Antonio) Trillanes and (Gregorio) Honasan ranking high in the elections," the senator said.

While Metro Manila remained an opposition hotbed, Gordon said there was a major shift in the provinces.

"The dynasties that used to have control of provinces like Pampanga, Zambales and Bataan are going down. These are changing times brought about by the revolution of communication. Politicians have to be more clear about what they stand for because people are now more well-informed," said Gordon.

Machinery

Presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said the administration was "assessing the extent of cooperation given to us by the local officials and the local campaign machinery."

He said the picture being projected by the media quick counts was not acceptable to the administration.

"We'd rather wait and rely on the Namfrel (National Movement for Free Elections) but based on our reports from the field, there are areas where we are disappointed and there are areas that we know gave their level best," Claudio said.

Before the elections on Monday, Claudio and other administration officials brushed off pre-election surveys showing GO possibly winning six Senate seats and the independents two seats.

The officials said the surveys did not consider the strength of the administration's machinery.

Visayas and Mindanao votes

Pichay urged the media to be fair by giving adequate coverage of the election results in the Visayas and Mindanao, and in other parts of Luzon where the TU candidates were performing well. *(See story on Page A1.)*

"With less than 5 percent of the votes counted, the media emphasis has been on the National Capital Region, which since time immemorial has always voted for the opposition. Naturally, we will take a hit in these and other areas," Pichay said.

Like Pichay, TU deputy spokesperson Tonypet Albano cautioned "the public not to be fooled by the unofficial and marginal results."

"Why not count the Visayas and Mindanao with the same percentage?" Albano asked the media groups doing the quick counts.

Despite the lead of GO candidates in the early election returns, TU spokesperson Joseph Ace Durano still had his cherubic smile on when he told the media that administration candidates would end up with six to eight seats at the end of the counting.

Durano said he was encouraged by the early results because TU had expected GO to win big in Metro Manila.

"What's not expected is that TU candidates are doing better in the NCR compared with what the surveys showed. The fact that they are up there is good because it won't take as much votes in the Visayas and Mindanao for them to go up," said Durano.

"Just wait till the Visayas and Mindanao votes start coming in," he said.

Most of the local government officials carried only two or four candidates from the opposition "which is why, on the whole, the reasonable expectation is still six to eight for Team unity," Durano said.

Real battle in provinces

Lakas-CMD executive director Ray Roquero said the ruling coalition was not disturbed at all by the early lead of opposition candidates in the senatorial race.

"The real battle begins when votes from the provinces are tallied. Let them have the lead now, but Team Unity will show its strength later," he said. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

Comelec to media: Disclose origin of votes in quick counts

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS yesterday told media entities, particularly television and radio stations, conducting quick counts to disclose the origin of the votes in their tallies.

"There is a presumption of a final counting that is being created without the people knowing where the votes were coming from," said James Arthur Jimenez, Comelec education and information department director.

Jimenez said he had drafted a memorandum containing the instructions and was circulating it for approval or suggested revisions to the commissioners and other top Comelec officials.

"Everyone is entitled to know what those figures represent. It's just being fair to your viewers and listeners," he said.

Jimenez named GMA 7 and ABS-CBN 2 as among the media outfits that should take the lead in revealing the sources of their data for the sake of clarity and transparency.

The Comelec, he added, must also be able to verify whether the results being aired on TV or radio covered representative samples to counter accusations that the media quick counts were being used for trending.

Gabriel Claudio, a presidential political adviser, appealed to the National Movement for Free Elections to speed up its count to counter what he called "mind-conditioning" and "trending" by media quick counts.

No TU sweep in Visayas

From page A1

for Free Elections (Namfrel).

The count covered 807 of 14,060 precincts in Cebu province, or 5.74 percent of the votes cast, as of 2:30 p.m.

In second place was Joker Arroyo (TU), 50,525; followed by Edgardo Angara (TU), 46,544; Manuel Villar (GO), 46,541; Loren Legarda (GO), 46,126; Michael Defensor (TU), 45,940; Francis Escudero (GO), 43,282; Miquel Zubiri (TU), 43,282; Noynoy Aquino (GO), 42,575; Prospero Pichay (TU), 40,690; Ralph Recto (TU), 39,058, and Panfilo Lacson (GO), 35,294.

John Henry Osmeña (GO), a Cebuano, is No. 18, with 18,297 votes.

Iloilo

In Iloilo City, early returns also point to an independent and GO candidates leading, despite the promise of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to give a P10,000 bonus to barangay leaders who could deliver 12-0 for the TU ticket.

Pangilinan was leading in the Iloilo senatorial race, according to the Namfrel quick count that covered 177 of the city's 1,144 precincts as of 3 p.m.

Pangilinan had 13,637 votes, followed by Villar (12,958), Escudero (12,828), Defensor (12,107), Legarda (11,993), Arroyo (11,554), Aquino (11,477), Angara (11,246), Zubiri (10,776), Recto (10,153), Lacson (8,750) and Cayetano (8,114).

Eastern Samar

Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone earlier bragged that he would give TU a clean sweep in his province.

But early returns gathered by the province's Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) showed that as of 2 p.m. (50 of 1,000 precincts), the first 10 slots were taken by GO candidates. Only Angara and Arroyo made it to the last two slots.

In first place was Escudero (4,254), followed by Legarda (4,067), Lacson (3,520), Aquino (3,116), Villar (3,081), Antonio Trillanes (3,070), Pangilinan (2,952), Allan Cayetano (2,678), Aquilino Pimentel III (2,402), and Arroyo (2,036).

Evardone, reached on his mobile phone, yesterday conceded that his earlier "projection" of 12-0 in favor of TU might not materialize, but he said there was no cause yet for the opposition to pop the champagne.

"The counted votes, which are not yet official, showing them leading is just about one percent of the total votes cast. There is nothing for us to worry and it is early for the opposition to celebrate," said Evardone, who was the media officer of TU.

Evardone said he was confident that the TU senatorial candidates would eventually occupy more seats than the opposition.

"But whatever will be the result, let us respect the voice and will of the people. It is ultimately the people who choose their leaders," Evardone said.

Negros Occidental

In Negros Occidental, GO candidates also dominated the early count despite Gov. Joseph Marañon's support for TU candidates.

PPCRV results in the province as of 2:30 p.m. (53 precincts) showed Escudero in first place (3,071), followed by Aquino (2,953), Legarda (2,920), Pangilinan (2,818), Zubiri (2,663), Villar (2,446), Arroyo (2,638), Cayetano (2,359), Defensor (2,272), Angara (2,256), Lacson (2,204), and Pimentel (2,151).

Even in the own quick count initiated by the Negros Occidental provincial government, only six TU candidates were in the Magic 12. Pangilinan and 5 GO candidates also made it. Zubiri got 1,075; Pangilinan—1,053; Villar—1,027; Escudero—958; Aquino—936; Angara—872; Recto—851; Arroyo—793; Lacson—731; Defensor—724; and Cayetano—688.

Antique

In Antique, administration ally Gov. Sally Zaldivar-Perez was ahead of her opponents in her reelection bid but the TU candidates were lagging behind GO candidates.

Unofficial count by the PPCRV-Antique (as of 2 p.m., 135 of 1,327 precincts) showed Legarda in the lead (14,040), followed by Escudero (11,229), Villar (10,938), Pangilinan (9,673), Aquino ((9,631), Angara (8,355), Zubiri (8309), Lacson (7,707), Arroyo (7,441), Recto (7,108), Defensor (6,977), and Trillanes (6,946).

Roxas City, Leyte

In Roxas City in Capiz, Namfrel's partial unofficial count (as of 3 p.m. covering 45 precincts), also showed Escudero in the lead with 8,419 votes, followed by Aquino (8,411); Villar (8,398); Legarda (8,346); Pimentel (7,807); Zubiri (5,582); Angara (5,556); Honasan (5,452); Lacson (5,308); Trillanes (4,820); Defensor (4,845); Osmeña (4,647); and Roco (4,647).

In Leyte, the bailiwick of the Romualdez and Petilla clans, the President's allies, GO candidates were leading in the Namfrel count (as of 3:40 p.m. covering 884 precincts in Tacloban City and the towns of Babatngon, Sta. Fe and Palo).

The Top 12 were Legarda (7,059); Escudero (6,215); Lacson (5,682); Cayetano (5,243); Aquino (5,164); Villar (5,001); Pimentel (4,843); Honasan (4,805); Angara (3,607); Trillanes (4,556); Pangilinan (4,363); and Roco (3,246).

Dumaguete

Results as of 2:26 p.m. of the Namfrel-Nassa-PPCRV Quick Count from 158 precincts in Dumaguete City in Negros Oriental, also showed GO candidates leading the race.

Pangilinan was No. 1 with 13,797 votes, followed by Aquino (12,917), Escudero (12,110), Legarda (11,632), Villar (11,505), Angara (10,633), Arroyo (10,238), Lacson (9,753), Zubiri (9,333), Recto (9,317), Defensor (8,427), and Pimentel (8,095).

Even in Ilocos Sur, Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson could not deliver a 12-0 victory for the TU slate.

Initial results showed that his fellow TU candidates were faring poorly although he emerged as the top choice of his province mates. *Reports from Jhunnex Napallacan, Cyrain Cabueñas, Joey Gabieta, Cynthia B. Pease, Alex Pal, Romy Aramado, Carla Gomez, Nestor Burgos Jr., Ma. Diosa Labiste, David Sinay, Hazel Villa, Felipe Celino and Bernadette Parco, Inquirer Visayas; Leoncio Balbin Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Priest still leading in Pampanga race

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE priest seeking to become governor of Pampanga is making a strong showing in the initial count by two poll watchdogs.

An independent candidate, Fr. Eddie Panlilio had garnered 19,314 votes as of yesterday, according to tallies by the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV).

The tallies came from 289 of 1,203 polling precincts in Arayat, Bacolor, Lubao and Sto. Tomas towns and this capital city.

Panlilio's rivals, Board Member Lilia Pineda and reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid, had posted 15,526 and 13,182 votes, respectively.

Panlilio, 53, enjoyed wide margins in this city and in Sto. Tomas, a parish he served in the late 1990s.

His campaign's own count showed him in a close fight with the 28-year-old Lapid, not with Pineda.

Panlilio's tabulation, which is displayed in the lobby of his headquarters, showed him with 169,000 votes, against 157,300 for Lapid and 149,858 for Pineda.

The 12:45 p.m. tally represented 42.24 percent of the reported 1,124,800 registered voters in Pampanga.

But Pineda, in a phone interview, said she was leading her opponents as of 1:30 p.m. yesterday.

"It's a close fight with Among (Father) Ed," she said, referring to what she claimed was her more than 5,000-vote margin over Panlilio.

Lapid, she said, was "*dumidikit din* (staying close)."

Pineda did not disclose the figures.

Lapid said he, too, was leading in his own count.

A tossup

As of 2:30 p.m. yesterday, the governor had garnered 69,100 votes, or 36.3 percent, of the 190,307 votes tallied from election returns and certificates of votes, Lapid's campaign manager Fidel Arcenas said. Panlilio posted 64,921 votes and Pineda, 56,285.

"This will be a tossup between Governor Lapid and Father Panlilio," Arcenas said.

Also yesterday, Pineda raised a howl over reports that Lapid's supporters had seized several ballot boxes in his hometown of Porac.

The police were still checking the reports. Arcenas immediately denied the accusation.

Lapid and Pineda have traded allegations about vote-buying and other forms of cheating.

Temie Lambino, Comelec Pampanga supervisor, said he and the members of the provincial canvassing board expected the town and city canvassing to be over by Wednesday night, at the latest.

The pace of the canvassing since 3 p.m. Monday was "normal," according to Lambino.

Canvassing in some towns took longer than usual because of tension between candidates and their supporters. Lambino cited cases in Magalang, Mabalacat and the cities of Angeles and San Fernando.

Fr. Panlilio: 'Light of new RP politics, a pocket of hope'

From page A1

"jueteng" lord Bong Pineda.

Panlilio's entry into politics not only raised questions on whether the constitutionally-drawn line separating Church and State had been blurred in Pampanga.

It was also seen as a bold, if not quixotic, challenge to the well-funded machinery and clout of the Lapids and Pinedas, both allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

A victory by Panlilio against such odds would signify that "his community is standing up and has had enough," said Dinky Soliman, former social welfare secretary and now a staunch critic of the Arroyo administration.

'A zone of energy'

Whether Panlilio wins or not, Soliman said, "he has come out as one of the best examples of the new Philippine politics, one who challenged the worst of old Philippine politics."

"He is showing that you can win without guns, goons, gold and 'Garci,'" she said, alluding to the massive election-rigging operations that allegedly occurred in the May 2004 presidential election.

"He represents a zone of energy, a pocket of hope in Philippine politics," Soliman added.

Being a priest per se may not even be the most crucial factor behind Panlilio's appeal to the electorate, she said.

"It's the life he has spent with the poor," Soliman surmised, noting that Panlilio has been known for his missions for small farmers and the indigenous Aeta tribesmen since the Mt. Pinatubo eruption in 1991.

Traditional politics

Mike Luz, a former education undersecretary and now president of International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, said Panlilio "would completely turn around everything" should he win.

"Being antimachinery, antipatronage, it will be a statement about everything that is wrong in the province," he said. "It suggests that the people must be sick and tired of traditional politics. They must be saying now that 'we are not stupid and we know what has been going on.'"

But Bernas shared some curious observations and words of caution about Panlilio's feat.

How come, he asked, "it had to take a priest (candidate)" for the electorate to respond to calls for honest public service and good governance?

"Why can't a layperson do it as well?" the Jesuit wondered aloud.

Bernas, an expert on the Constitution, also maintained that Panlilio's accomplishments on the public, secular stage should not be taken as "a work of the Church, but the work of the people."

"It should not be said here that the Church got involved in politics," Bernas said.

He noted that Panlilio "temporarily sacrificed" his priesthood, suspended his performance of the Sacraments, and waged his campaign without using Church resources.

Bernas doubted whether Panlilio's case—which he described as "extraordinary"—would encourage more priests to run for public office.

The Kapatiran 3

Panlilio wasn't alone in challenging the status quo.

In the senatorial races, three Kapatiran candidates—Zosimo Paredes, Martin Bautista, and Adrian Sison—ran on the platform of moral, "God-centered" governance.

They have made their presence felt in middle-class neighborhoods—and in media—but unlike Panlilio, who is showing an early lead over his rivals, the Kapatiran candidates have not landed even inside the Top 20.

Luz, who said he voted for the trio, maintained that fellow voters who did the same should not consider it a waste of ballot space: "What we are doing here is establishing a base. Even if they don't win today, come 2010 we already have something to build on."

"It was a conscience vote that had to be made," Luz maintained.

Platform aside, he added, Kapatiran's debut in these elections also showed to the electorate that "you don't have to put up a full slate" to wage a serious campaign and that a party can stand on its own strength, without having to engage in compromises, turncoatism, or tradeoffs to build up its ranks.

For former University of the Philippines president Dodong Nemenzo, however, Kapatiran may have to go beyond mouthing motherhood statements and slogans about their being "God-centered" or averse to the "culture of violence"—in order to do better in future elections.

"Many groups have used those same words before they did," Nemenzo quipped.

He said that while the fledgling party might have appealed most to the middle-class who are seeking an alternative to mainstream politicians, the voters were still looking for "concrete" action plans from the group.

Concrete example.

Nemenzo said that of the three Kapatiran candidates, he only voted for Bautista because he "came up with an idea and made himself a concrete example for the people: A former OFW (Overseas Filipino Worker) who made good and chose to return so that he can serve his country."

The one-time political science professor also observed that, even among Metro Manila voters who have ample access to the media and are supposedly well-informed about the candidates, Kapatiran is not doing well in the initial tallies.

Padaca trails in Isabela; Robredo up in Naga; Bersamin leads Valera in Abra

From page A1

Padaca got 508.

In the 2004 elections, Padaca, a polio victim, trounced Dy's brother, then reelectionist Gov. Faustino Dy Jr. That defeat ended the Dy family's more than 30-year hold on the top political post in the province.

The initial unofficial results showed Dy getting more votes in the family's bailiwicks of Cauayan City and Reina Mercedes town, while Padaca won in Mallig, Roxas and Delfin Albano towns.

Ederlino Tabilas, Commission on Elections director for Cagayan Valley, said Isabela had been placed under the poll body's control to preempt the eruption of violence during the canvassing and to avoid a repeat of the burning of town halls and ballot box snatching and switching incidents in 2004.

Pangasinan

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. called his strong showing in the congressional race in the fourth district of Pangasinan a "glorious victory" for which he "worked very hard."

"This is a product of years of toil, sacrifice, hard work and politics of performance," De Venecia said.

Partial and unofficial results from the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) in Dagupan City released yesterday showed De Venecia with 2,127 votes against Dagupan City Mayor Benjamin Lim's 925.

Both camps' respective counts, however, showed De Venecia as the possible winner.

Though tired from the rigors of a 45-day campaign, De Venecia said he was not resting and that he was preparing the proposed legislative program of the 14th Congress in his capacity as president of the dominant administration party, Lakas-CMD.

"I'm very tired, but I got to do my work," he said.

Lim, too, said he was reporting back to work as mayor today. He said he was waiting for the final election results and would analyze them.

"I need a break after the grueling electoral exercise. But I will report for work," he said.

Lim said he would want to find out what went wrong in his bid to challenge De Venecia.

"I received reports about our [supporters], especially young voters, not able to cast their votes because their names were missing. We heard about soldiers who escorted people distributing money. We have evidence and witnesses who would come out to pursue the case," Lim said.

Lim and De Venecia have accused each other of using black propaganda and engaging in massive vote-buying before the elections.

De Venecia said he would extend a reconciliatory hand to Lim.

"It was time to bind the nation's wounds so the nation can move forward. I am humbled by the thought that we achieved magnificent victory and we should practice charity for all and malice toward none," he said.

Lim said his bid was not easy but it was "a good fight" because he was able to show to people the need for better governance.

"This is only a political battle where everything is settled through ballots. Let's start our life again," he said.

But Lim said he was sad that "money politics" reared its ugly head again.

"[It is] sad ... I can't totally blame them because the voters are really poor, vulnerable and weak," he said.

Nueva Ecija

Residents of Nueva Ecija were still clueless as to the winner of the gubernatorial contest between Vice Gov. Mariano Cristino Joson and Rep. Aurelio Umali.

Based on radio reports from Metro Manila that did not cite official sources, Umali was supposedly beating Joson by a big margin.

However, text messages from the Joson camp urged Novo Ecijanos not to believe the reports.

At 5 p.m. Tuesday, the quick count of the National Movement for Free Elections and the PPCRV has not started.

Fr. Aldrin Domingo, chair of the counting, said only the election returns from four precincts had so far been submitted by their volunteers and these were still being sorted.

Abra

Lawyer Emmanuel Ignacio, provincial election supervisor, urged the people to stay calm as they awaited the results of the election.

Abra gubernatorial candidate Eustaquio Bersamin said he did not expect that he would lead by a wide margin against his rival, Bangued Mayor Ma. Zita Valera.

"I did not expect this to be lopsided," said Bersamin, brother of slain Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr.

Bersamin said he was leading by about 20,000 votes over Valera, citing the monitoring done by his camp.

Partial and unofficial results from the PPCRV count showed Bersamin getting 36,390 votes while Valera got 19,187.

"My brother won this for me," Bersamin said.

Congressman Bersamin was shot dead with his bodyguard last Dec. 16 in Quezon City. Valera's husband, Abra Gov. Vicente Valera, was implicated in the murder as the alleged mastermind but the governor had denied his involvement.

In the lone congressional race, PPCRV figures showed Vicente Valera with 13,268 votes, trailing Lagayan Mayor Cecilia Luna, who had 14,917.

Batangas

Hundreds of comic books have circulated in Batangas attacking Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto but these did not affect her gubernatorial candidacy as she continued to lead the race in 434 precincts, according to the PPCRV.

As of 3:30 p.m. yesterday, Santos had 32,928 votes, followed by reelectionist Gov. Armando Sanchez, 19,963; retired Gen. Nestor Sanares, 1,066 and Marcos Mandanas, 536.

Santos' running mate Edwin Ermita led the vice gubernatorial race with 19,419, followed by Board Member Mark Leviste, 17,250; actor Christopher de Leon, 13,944; Fortunata Magsombol, 168, and Praxedes Bustamante, 64.

The 16-page comic book, titled "Ang Tunay na Eksena sa Likod ng Tabing," alleged that Santos caused the bankruptcy of meat vendors in Lipa and that her decisions were being manipulated by three city officials involved in graft and corruption. Its producer called itself the Alliance of Concerned Citizens of Lipa.

Santos' husband, Sen. Ralph Recto, denied the allegations and accused the Sanchez camp of masterminding its production. This was denied by provincial administrator Ronaldo Geron.

Sanchez's own comic book, titled "Bakit Si Arman," also attacked Santos for her capability to lead as governor, saying that she only worked as mayor on Mondays.

Camarines Sur

Reelectionist Mayor Jesse Robredo of Naga City obtained 3,443 votes in 35 precincts as of noon yesterday for an early lead over his rival, Jojo Villafuerte, who got 992 votes, according to the PPCRV.

The city has 356 precincts and 70,572 registered voters.

Robredo's team was also leading in the races for vice mayor and all the 10 positions in the city council.

In the same precincts, Sulpicio S. Roco Jr., younger brother of the late Raul S. Roco, led by only 730 votes against incumbent Rep. Luis R. Villafuerte.

The PPCRV has yet to receive results in the congressional race in the first district. Both camps of rival candidates, Dato Arroyo and Mayor Sabas Mabulo of San Fernando, confirmed that President Macapagal-Arroyo's son had been defeated in San Fernando and Pasacao towns.

Mabulo said it was still a neck-and-neck fight, but Ower Andal, campaign manager of Arroyo, cited initial results showing that Arroyo was leading by at least 20,000 votes in the eight other towns of the district.

Kalinga

Partial canvassed returns from 117 precincts in Tabuk town in Kalinga showed Floydelia Diasen, a substitute candidate to her slain husband, Vice Gov. Rommel Diasen, was leading with 8,382 votes against Rep. Laurence Wacnang, who received 2,501.

Ifugao

Former Gov. Teodoro Baguilat Jr. was leading the gubernatorial race in Ifugao with 19,660 votes, partial unofficial results from the PPCRV showed. His rivals, Eugene Balitang and reelectionist Gov. Glenn Prudenciano, received 18,665 and 17,258 votes, respectively. *Reports from Villamor Visaya Jr., Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Frank Cimatu, Villamor Visaya Jr. and Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon; Marlon Alexander Luistro and Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

School set ablaze; 2 poll watchers dead; 15 cops killed, wounded

From page A1

Philippine National Police toll is 143.

The other reports of fatalities from the police and military yesterday said a soldier was killed on Sunday in an ambush by communist New People's Army guerrillas in Lope de Vega in Northern Samar; village councilman Milbert Camariosa, 32, was shot dead in Tubungan, Iloilo, on Monday, and a total of 15 PNP personnel were killed during the five-month election period.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus denounced the attack on the Taysan school as a "despicable crime" and paid tribute to the "heroism" of the slain teacher.

PNP Director General Oscar Calderon said police and Philippine Air Force troops guarding the school were caught by surprise and were unable to fire back at the attackers because of the ensuing stampede.

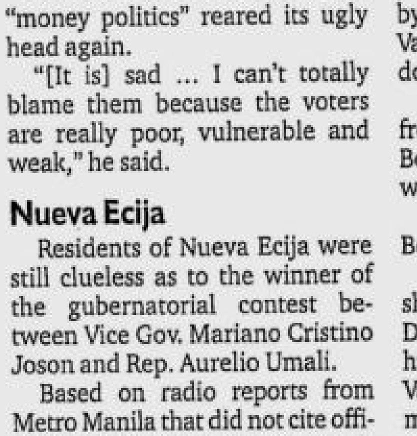
The PNP chief also reported that 15 policemen had been killed and 17 wounded during the election period. He said that the slain officers will be promoted posthumously. Their families will receive financial aid and scholarships.

Police casualties

"This is a fitting tribute to the heroism and courage shown by our policemen in the performance of their duties. Their heroism will not be forgotten," Calderon said.

Among the slain officers were five police escorts of Mindoro Occidental Gov. Josephine Sato who were killed in San Jose town in an ambush by suspected communist rebels on May 10. This was the biggest number of policemen killed in an election-related incident. Six policemen were wounded.

In the latest report of violence involving police, unknown men armed with M-16 rifles shot and killed SPO2 Rex Agmata in Solsona town in Ilocos Norte on Monday night as he was typing a text message. He was then on duty at the Catangraran Elementary school.



ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

THE LOVED ONES: Nellie Banaag left behind a son Galileo, 12, and her husband, Galileo Sr.

The PNP's civilian toll as of 9 a.m. yesterday was 128 deaths in 218 incidents. The dead included 60 candidates and other politicians and 66 of their supporters. A total of 149 people were wounded.

Despite the numbers, the PNP described the elections as "relatively peaceful." The PNP said that in the 2004 presidential election, 189 people were killed and in the 2001 elections, 111 people died.

Polls 'relatively peaceful'

Calderon said the worst of the election violence, or "60 percent" of it, was over. The 118,000-strong PNP could now focus "on our regular functions of law enforcement and crime prevention and control," he said.

He urged the losing candidates and their followers not to resort to violence but to pray.

"We appeal to those who are losing, don't disrupt the canvassing and take the law into your hands. The people have decided. Let the will of the people prevail. Just pray you will still catch up," Calderon told reporters in Filipino.

He blamed some of the incidents on the communists.

"The efforts of the CPP-NPA to disrupt the elections and discredit the government were another vain attempt to trample on our democracy. We will not allow them an inch but we encourage them to embrace our democratic system," Calderon said. The CPP is the Communist Party of the Philippines; the NPA is its armed wing.

Foreign observers

There were also scattered reports of bombings and rocket attacks.

Two of 21 foreign election observers were in Datu Odin Sinsuat in Shariff Kabunsuan when an explosion ripped through the Dalican Elementary School on Monday and injured two persons.

"We were scared," said Munira Khan of Bangladesh. "The explosion was so loud as if it was close to us. Then we saw smoke billowing."

Thai Somsri Hananuntasuk, director of the Asian Network for Free Elections, was in Aghanistan for the election there in 2005. "At least in Afghanistan they have the UN representatives and Nato observers there," she said.

Muhammad Yunus Lebai Ali, a Malaysian lecturer on human development and member of the Anfrel, said the "complexity of the system" of the country's elections provided a room for irregularity and fraud.

"I would not say it was a free election," he said of the election process he had observed at Shariff Kabunsuan. "I would rather say it was a very expensive election."

"Most of us were very surprised by the conduct of elections," said Jessica Tulloch, a Chicago volunteer with the United Methodist Church. "Members of our group were able to actually witness vote-buying taking place inside a precinct." *With reports from Leila B. Salaverria, Cathy Yamsuan, Jerry Esplanada; Cristina Arzadon, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Marlon Ramos and Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Nash B. Maulana, Edwin O. Fernandez and Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao; Franklin Caliguid, Inquirer Mindanao; Inquirer Visayas; AP*

Air Force receives 11 used Huey choppers from US

By Tarra Quismundo

THE PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE has received from the United States this month 11 second-hand Huey helicopters to beef up its counter-insurgency campaign in Mindanao, PAF chief Lt. Gen. Horacio Tolentino said yesterday.

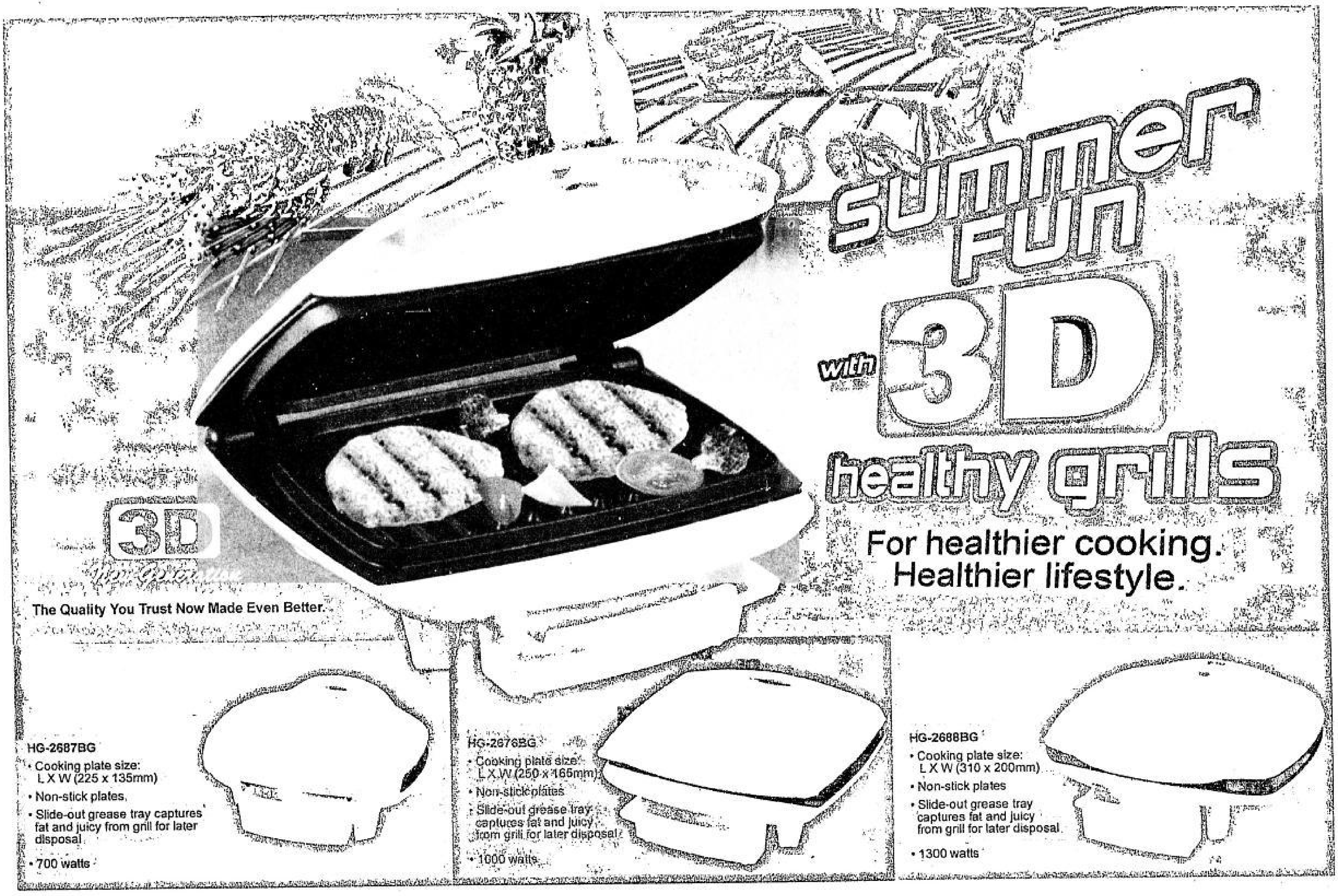
The Hueys (UH-1Hs), used by the US military for troop deployment and combat during the Vietnam War, are undergoing test flights before they are transported to the PAF 410th Maintenance Wing in the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga for full restoration.

"It is a big help for us because it will be used for transport and air support in combat areas. We will deploy them in our area commands in Davao, Cotabato, Butuan City, Cagayan de Oro and as backup in Zamboanga," Tolentino said..

The military recently raised an "extreme terror alert" in Mindanao, where a series of bombings has been linked to Islamic extremist—the Abu Sayaff as well as breakaway groups of both the Moro National Liberation Front(MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberaton Front (MILF). Government troops in Sulu, backed by US advisers, are also engaged in hot pursuit operations against suspected Indonesian members of the the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah.

The new arrivals, received through a US government grant, raised to 53 the Air Force's operational Huey units, its largest fleet of any other kind of aircraft.

The Air Force has been standing by the Huey's reliability as a combat work horse despite previous accidents, most recent among which was the UH-1H crash in Cebu where seven civilians and two soldiers were killed.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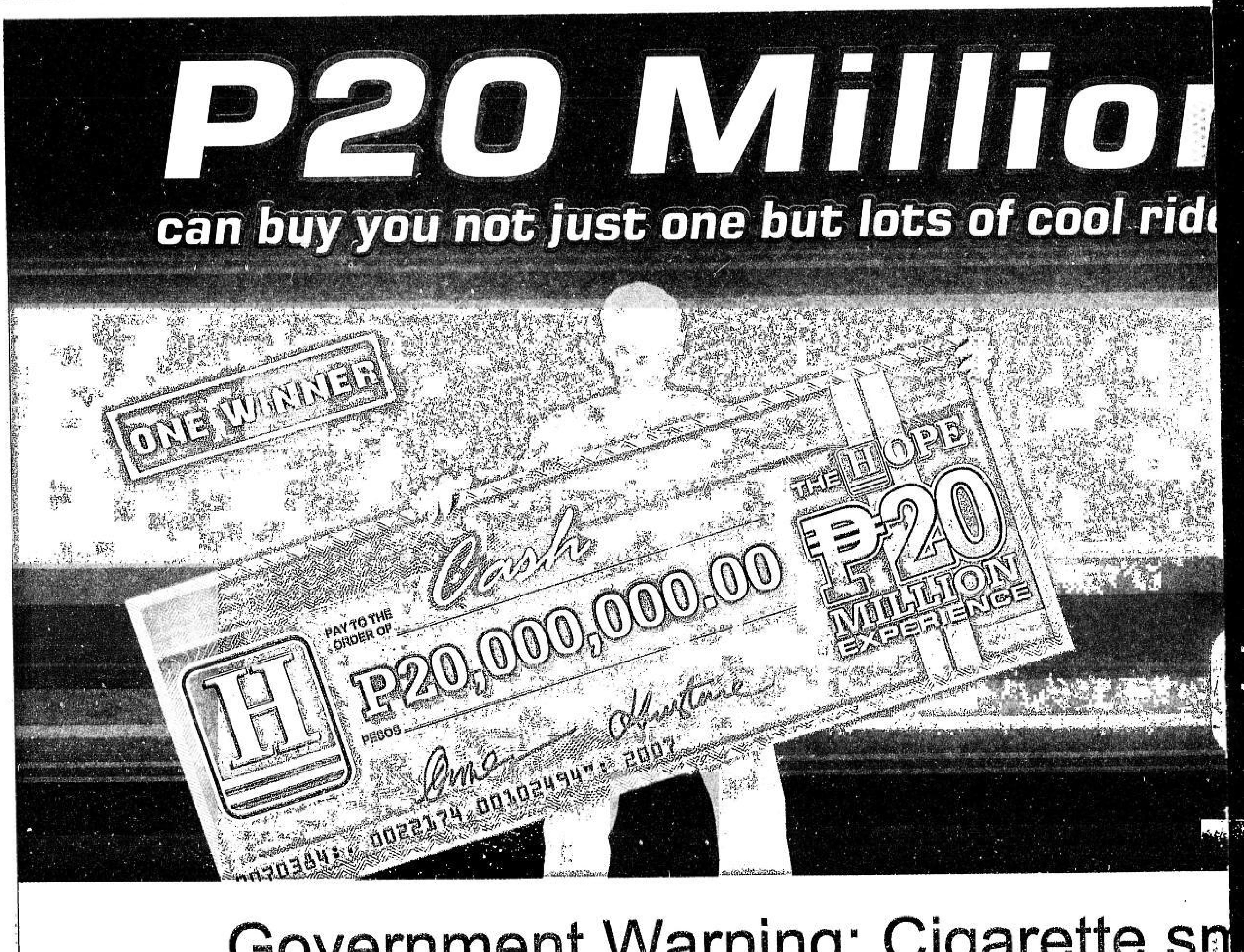
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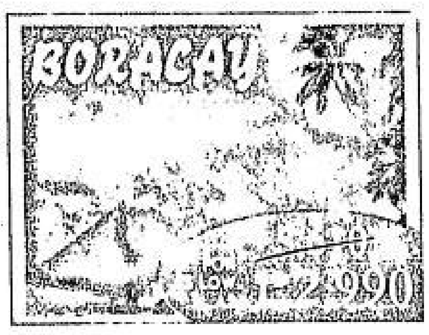

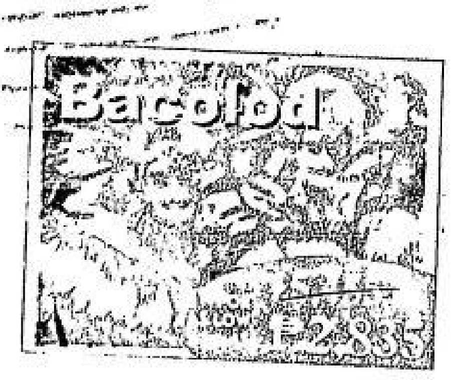

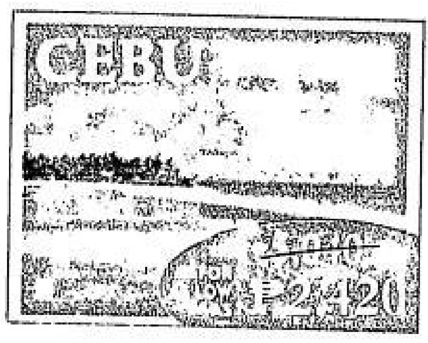

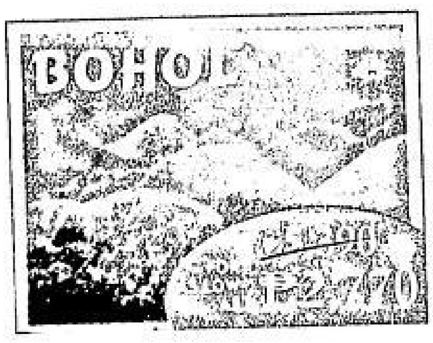

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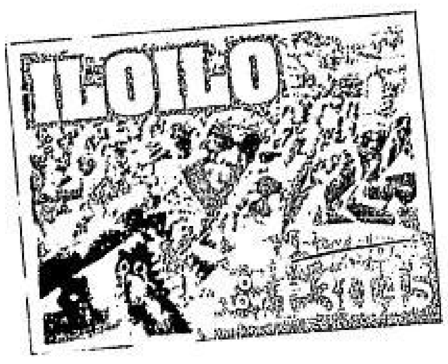

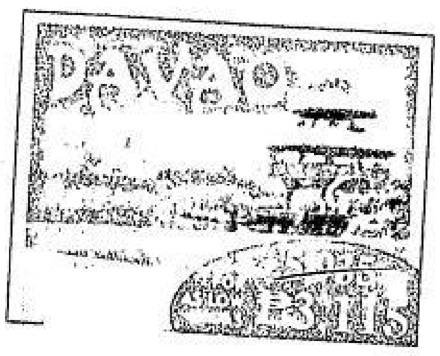

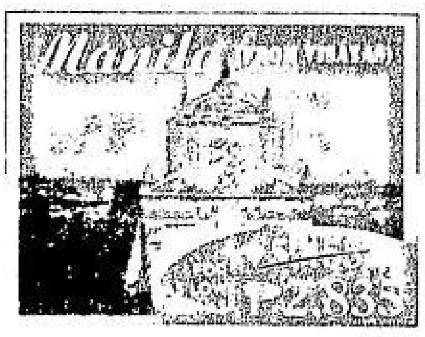

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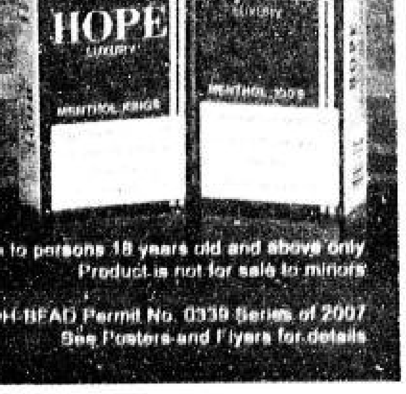

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Isolated cases?

EDITORIAL

ROMEO MACALINTAL, PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL Arroyo's election lawyer, together with Tonypet Albano, spokesman for the administration's Team Unity, yesterday held a press conference assailing exit polls and the media for reporting cases of electoral fraud. "It's not true that there's cheating," Macalintal complained, adding that the media were poisoning the minds of the youth and giving a black eye to the country since international observers might pass on reports of fraud. "These are just isolated instances," he said, and so, "let us support our government."

Albano said there wasn't any ballot-box snatching, vote-switching, or mass intimidation, but then since the era of *dagdag-bawas* began, these older forms of fraud (which were in wide use in 1986) have become obsolete.

Malacañang spent Tuesday afternoon lashing out at the TV network quick counts, accusing them of "trending" on behalf of the opposition. It urged Namfrel to speed up its quick count, although Namfrel's Danny Magbual has said the results of the media quick counts were not very different from theirs. The Pulse Asia exit poll on NCR voter preferences indicating only one administration candidate would make it to the winners' circle was especially alarming to the Palace, and so it had to call the press conference.

The Philippine National Police proclaimed Monday's election as "the most peaceful in Philippine history," oblivious to the burning of a schoolhouse in Batangas and shootouts and other mayhem throughout the country. Perhaps it was the most peaceful if our national history began only in 2001.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos held his own press conference and declared that the election had disproved the opposition's suspicion that there would be massive cheating. The only problem he admitted had to do with disenfranchisement of thousands of voters, and he promised to create a committee to look into the matter. The Comelec's pre-election boast that the results would be known within three days after the balloting has been buried, along with the people's hopes that the last election would be anything other than more of the usual.

The public didn't deserve more than the usual bumbling, inefficiency, insensitivity, murder and mayhem. Basically three out of every four voters decided to do their civic and political duty, and neither they nor the teachers got a fair deal from the system.

The planning for the electoral exercises to come, whether it's a national plebiscite on Charter change within the next year or so, or the next barangay election, or the combined national and local polls in 2010, should have begun yesterday. But today and tomorrow, the preparations will be bogged down by a system that is unable to produce results.

And there lies the problem. The only question now is whether the presumption of an irregular election will turn into a certainty as the evidence rolls in, or whether the manipulators can produce the results they want quicker than proof of fraud can see the light of day. The antidote to the popular will is the claim that when the "command votes" from the Visayas and Mindanao finally get counted, they will overturn every other measure of public opinion. And this requires buying time even as Palace officials demonize everyone, from the students and teachers helping conduct media counts, to survey firms, to media themselves and even all of Metro Manila.

The only people who didn't see all of these coming were the Comelec officials. For example, they admitted widespread voter disenfranchisement (will it match, or exceed, the figure of 900,000 from 2004?) only because of pressure from international observers, but the signs were there for everyone to see. The hatchet job done on opposition senatorial candidate Alan Peter Cayetano, which saw the boards of election inspectors in precinct after precinct debating what to do with votes cast for him, the failure of elections in parts of Muslim Mindanao, resulting in a reservoir of votes that could decide the fate the lower-ranking senatorial aspirants—all these add up to much more than "isolated cases" as Palace officials are wont to dismiss them.

They constitute a pattern, a strategy, and a willful refusal by those in authority to perform their jobs and do their duties.

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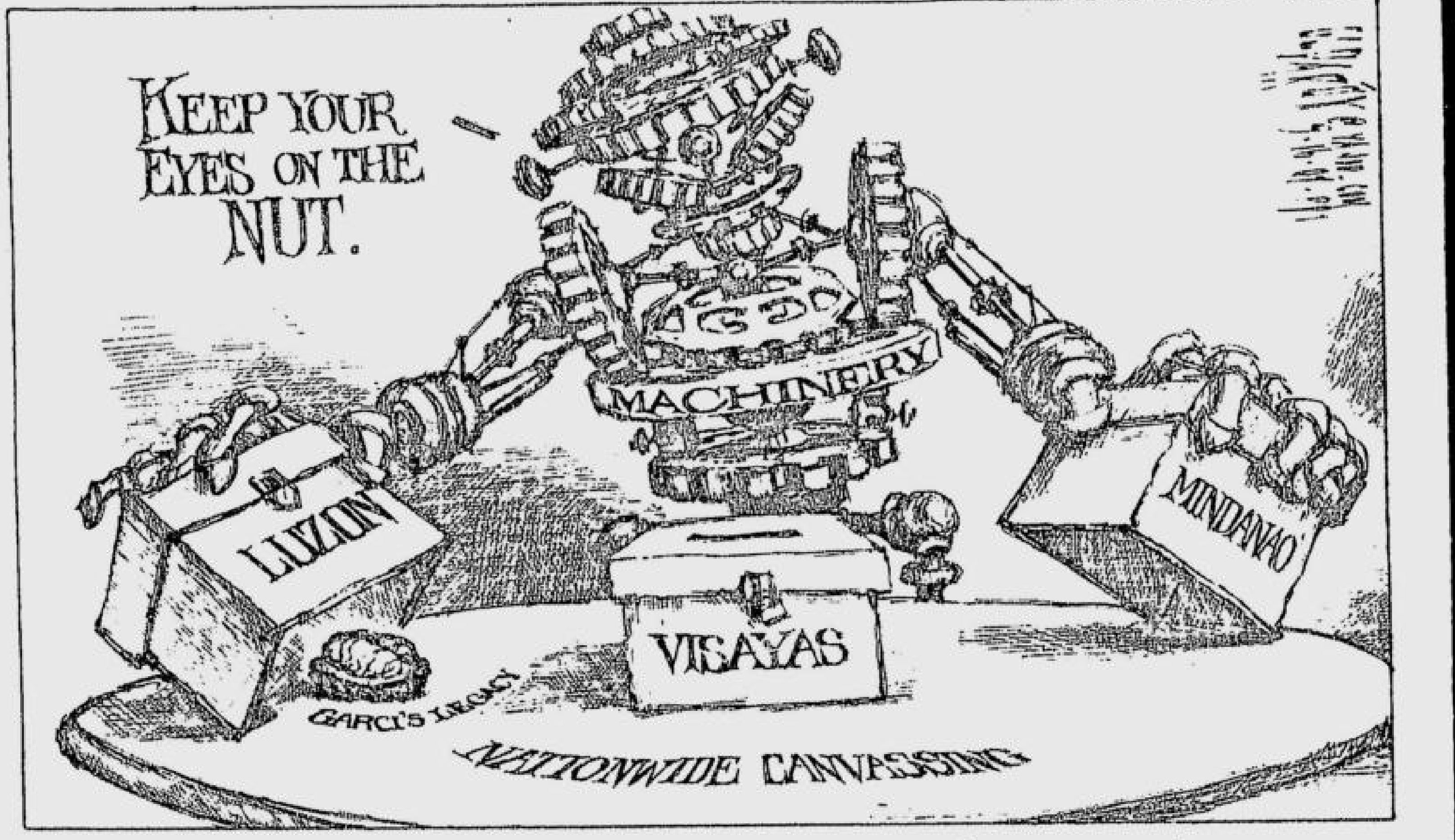


More on missing Manansala mural

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

ROY MABASA, WHO IDENTIFIED HIMSELF as "president" of the National Press Club, wrote to our editor in chief (not to me) to reply to my column of May 4 reporting the alleged theft and sale of the mural, painted by National Artist Vicente Manansala, that was part of the wall of the NPC dining hall. He said I was consulted about it and that I gave my permission.

That is not accurate. Mabasa has conveniently forgotten some important details.

In the first place, who am I to give permission to sell the jewel of the NPC building? The truth is that when I was consulted about the proposed sale, my reply was that I doubted if they had the right to do that. And that even if they had that right, it should be sold only to the National Museum, the Lopez Museum or the Ayala Museum so that the public could see it at any time. And as he himself said, I added that the deal should be attended by "utmost transparency and prudence."

But what happened? The sale was attended by utmost secrecy. No formal notice was given to members that such an important property would be sold. Even assuming (but not admitting) that an alleged "general assembly" had given its imprimatur, there was no announcement that a final decision to sell, to whom and for how much, had actually been made by the board. It is strange for an association of press people that no press release was issued—neither on the holding of a general assembly nor of the decision to sell. And it was sold not to the museums but to an unknown buyer.

The mural was quickly, quietly, secretly and surreptitiously removed and a new plywood wall was put in its place during the Christmas holidays when members were very busy. When members went to the club after the holidays, the mural was gone. There was no explanation where it went. Even now, the alleged NPC officers refuse to identify the real buyer. Why all the secrecy if the deal was on the level?

Until now, they have not shown the documents for the sale—the deed of sale, the invoices, official receipts, etc. Where are the records of the alleged Oct. 27 general meeting? Where is the list of NPC members who attended that meeting and their signatures attesting to their attendance? Where are the official minutes of the meeting? And where is the resolution of the board approving the sale?

I asked those questions in my column, but Mabasa did not answer them in his long reply.

It turns out that the NPC board does not have the right to sell the mural. The Government Service Insurance System is claiming ownership of the mural as well as of the NPC building and lot and has demanded that the mural be returned to it and that the NPC vacate the building since it has not been paying rent to the GSIS.

But Mabasa said that "we have in our possession documents to prove that the land, the building, and all improvements, including the mural, belong to the NPC, not the GSIS." Yet he admitted last Feb. 2 that the property was mortgaged and foreclosed by the GSIS.

In his reply to the GSIS demand letter, he said, "We have sufficient legal basis to stand on to sustain our position that said mural was not part of the property mortgaged to and foreclosed by (GSIS)." On Feb. 2, he admitted that the NPC property was "mortgaged to and foreclosed by" the GSIS, but on May 5 he claimed "that the land, the building, and all improvements, including the mural, belong to the NPC-not the GSIS." Now which is which?

Mabasa said that "the P10 million proceeds from the sale remain intact." But in the next paragraph, he admitted that close to P2.5 million has already been spent. "The balance of the fund will be put in a perpetual trust fund that future administrations cannot touch. Only the interest of the fund will be used for benefits and financial assistance to members."

Really? When I was NPC president many years ago, I also put up a perpetual trust fund from donations given by the Asian Wall Street Journal and banker Ray Orosa. The donations stipulated that the principal would not be touched and only the interest would be used to finance the training of Filipino business writers at the AWSJ in Hong Kong. Only one reporter was able to benefit from that trust fund. After I left the NPC presidency, no other journalist was sent to Hong Kong. Although the donation said that the fund would be administered by a three-man board composed of Orosa, a representative of the AWSJ and the president of NPC, the funds were spent for other purposes without consulting the other members of the trust fund board.

The NPC has not made an accounting of that fund. With the interest earnings through the years, that fund should have grown to more than a million pesos now, but I heard that it is almost gone. Isn't that estafa? The Mabasa administration, which inherited that obligation from previous administrations, should refund the amount, including interest. That fund does not belong to the NPC board or president. It belongs to Filipino business journalists.

What assurance can Mabasa give that his trust fund will not be squandered like that other trust fund? And what assurance does he have that the GSIS will not push through with its threat to file criminal and civil cases against him and his board if the mural is not returned to it?

To justify the sale, Mabasa claims they were forced to sell the mural because they could not raise the P2.5 million needed to restore it. But when I had that same mural restored by Vicente Manansala himself (assisted by National Artist Ang Kiukok, Malang, Rafael Asuncion, Cris Cruz, Gig de Pio and others) I spent only about P100,000 from funds earned (not donated) by the NPC. Even allowing for inflation, P2.5 million is a far cry from P100,000.

Calm before the storm

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

(I delivered this talk a couple of weeks ago at the Manila Polo Club before the Concerned Citizens Group. Some of the points here I've already dealt with in past columns, but they most urgently bear repeating. In light of last Monday's elections in particular threatening to rival the one in 1969 in scale of violence and fraud, or indeed in the use of the military as an instrument of terror, I hope you will heed this warning deeply seriously.)

LAST WEEK, MY FRIEND, JUN URBANO, BETter known as "Mr. Shooli," sent me a parable via text message that went this way:

A Filipino who just died was given a choice by St. Peter of going to heaven or hell. Curious as to what awaited him in those places, he asked to be given a preview of them. St. Peter obliged.

He took the Filipino first to heaven. There the Filipino saw angels playing the harp. Boring, the Filipino thought, and asked to be shown hell. St. Peter still obliged. The Filipino was astounded. Hell was full of beautiful women and men who were drinking and eating and, well, having one hell of a good time. It wasn't at all what he learned in catechism.

"I choose hell," the Filipino told St. Peter after they went back to the Pearly Gates. "Granted," said St. Peter. Next thing he knew, the Filipino was back in hell with Satan on hand to welcome him. But this time he saw only naked people screaming in torment as their flesh burned in the everlasting fire.

"What happened?" the Filipino asked in alarm. "The last time I was here, I saw heaven." "Well," said Satan, "the last time you were here, we were just campaigning."

There's much wisdom in this tomfoolery. Truly you get to have a presentiment of the hell that awaits this country after the heaven of the campaign, when people are temporarily employed mounting campaign floats and digging up perfectly good roads. Truly, you get to have an animal's sense of a storm about to break loose after a battered folk had mistaken the calm for the howling winds leaving.

I do think people should be deeply concerned about these elections. But I do think as well that people should be even more deeply concerned about what happens afterward. There will be the devil to pay.

Jovito Salonga was just quoted in my favorite newspaper as saying he sees Ferdinand Marcos in Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Fabian Ver in Hermogenes Esperon. The first in light of GMA ordering the military to mount more checkpoints presumably to curb electoral violence but which in fact merely guarantees more of it. Marcos did that in the 1969 election, and it went down in history as the most violent the country ever had. The second in light of Esperon landing in the surveys as among the top officials the citizens do not trust. "We recall a similar figure during the last days of martial law," said Salonga, "General Ver."

I agree wholeheartedly with those comparisons but will take them further down the road. GMA is like Marcos, and Esperon is like Ver, but the situation is not just like the 1969 elections or the February "snap elections." The situation is like an impending martial law.

What our situation specifically reminds me of is not the 1969 election but the 1971 one. As I said in a column some time ago, I have a horrendous feeling of déjà vu, as though I'm living that year all over again.

It was in August of 1971 that the Liberal Party senatorial slate was nearly wiped out by a couple of grenades thrown during its *miting de avance* in Plaza Miranda. Miraculously, none of them died, though a couple of spectators did and scores were wounded. The public laid the blame at Marcos' doorstep, and punished him in the elections in November that year. When the smoke cleared, only one Nacionalista was left standing. Salonga came out No. 1, though he could not campaign, confined as he was to a hospital bed.

The following year, Marcos met with another setback. That was in the form of a revelation by one of the Constitutional Convention delegates, Eduardo Quintero, that Marcos' henchmen had tried to bribe him to join the parliamentary group. A shift to a parliamentary system would have allowed Marcos to run again in 1973, this time as prime minister. The ensuing furor buried the parliamentary cause in its wake.

But if the opposition thought it had buried Marcos along with it, it was wrong. Dead wrong. A few months after that, with much Shakespearean lightning and thunder to presage it—literally in the form of the great flood of July-August—Marcos declared martial law.

Will history repeat itself?

Well, one thing I am convinced will happen. History will repeat itself in that, like Marcos, GMA will try to cling to power past her term. The only thing that's fuzzy in my crystal ball is what means or instrument she will employ to accomplish this.

For the strangest reason, each time you warn so, people are aghast and think you must be suffering from sunstroke. Even some friends of mine have reacted that way. Yet when you press them to tell you what exactly is going to stop GMA from wanting to stay on after 2010, all you'll really get may be summed up as: "She wouldn't dare!"

That was the same thing people said then about the threat of Marcos mounting a dictatorship: "He wouldn't dare!" Despite the signs everywhere of Marcos' ambition and capacity for ruthlessness, most people found the idea of him abolishing the country's favorite pastime, elections, inconceivable. The thinking went: Democracy had been around for decades, it was more than any one man could wreck. Even if Marcos managed to declare martial law, it wouldn't last for long. The public outrage would be a raging fire that would consume it in an instant.

Well, Marcos did dare. And martial law lasted for 14 years. *(To be concluded)*

A shameful exercise

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

WE OWE TO THE FRENCH THE ADAGE THAT the more things change, the more things remain the same. As I write this piece, I am deeply mortified over the petrification of our elections.

As of yesterday, more than a day after the closing of the 308,222 polling stations, the so-called quick count of Namfrel reported fewer than a million votes for the leading senatorial candidates, less than 3 percent of the total 33.7 million votes cast.

Within 24 hours of the run-off presidential election in France on May 6, the neo-Gaullist Nicolas Sarkozy was declared president, with 53 percent of the vote. On Wednesday last week, Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta was pronounced winner by a landslide (with 75 percent of the votes) as president of East Timor, an emerging democracy in the Southwest Pacific, light years behind the Philippines in democratic development.

This week, Sarkozy nominated the new French prime minister and is set to announce a package of reforms to revitalize the stagnant French economy, the sixth largest in the world. Things started to move and to hum in France and East Timor before the ink had dried on the results of their elections. While things are taking off there, we are only beginning to count the election results.

If we are lucky, we might know more than half of the partial unofficial results for the Senate, the House and the 17,900 local offices definitely in two weeks, despite the state-of-the-art computerized facilities of Namfrel and AMA. No one is in a particular hurry to speed up the count, much less the Commission on Elections. This delay is more than an opportunity and incentive for post-election cheating. As a feature of our electoral democracy, cheating and delays are a national shame. We have endured this shame for nearly 100 years since we started democratic elections in 1906, and nothing has changed since.

For a century since 1906, we have had countless elections, and have elected 12 presidents. Few of these governments were untainted by the scandal of corruption. We have endured and survived corrupt, abusive and oppressive governments, all democratically elected, but at this point, many citizens are not sure whether these governments were more bearable than the stigma of election cheating and the incompetence of delivering an honest result.

Last Monday strongly reminded me of the election in South Africa in April 1994, when the first all-black election voted out 46 years of apartheid (racial segregation) rule by white Afrikaners and elected Nelson Mandela as president. I remember that election vividly because it left a powerful impact on me. I was one of nine Filipino observers sent by the United Nations. We were nominated by Namfrel and drafted by the UN as part of its international team of observers.

At the briefing for the teams of international observers, Michael Manley of the UN told us that the election was the "most important in history and for Africa." He said it was a "historic occasion to bear witness to what South Africa can do to complete the process" of its emancipation. The international contingents included 14 members of the European parliament as well as observers from 52 African countries, from Thailand, Japan, Pakistan, South Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia, trade unionists from Britain, policemen from Poland, NGOs from the United States and Europe and the British Commonwealth countries.

I was assigned with a team headed by a retired Canadian diplomat to the township of Alexandra in Johannesburg, scene of racial rioting in the run-up to the election.

The election took place over four days, from April 24 to 27. On the final day, I got up at 5:45 a.m. and saw something I can never forget. As I scanned the horizon that early dawn, I saw as far as I could see a long ghostly procession of people, shuffling to the polling stations for hours silhouetted against the red African sunrise. This was the first time black Africans voted in their lives. Our team leader, Edward Drew, told us: "We are not here to run the election. You are here as witnesses. Don't content yourself with a passive role. You must be constantly aware and observe anything taking place. You must be seen everywhere."

The voting procedure was simplified for first time voters. The ballot contained symbols of the parties (there were nine). They simply had to tick the box opposite the parties. Parties were well defined. There were no booths.

Around mid-day, an old woman came to me to ask for help in filling her ballot. I told her I was forbidden to do that. I took her to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) officer.

The main parties were represented in the electoral inspectors board. Violence preceded the election. But there was no violence reported on the premises of the polling stations. The South African white security forces and the IEC conducted themselves with astonishing impartiality.

Here I was, I reflected last Monday, mentoring black, illiterate voters, with absolutely no experience in democracy, on the ways of democracy. On that day in South Africa, I learned more about the meaning of democracy from the shadows of the unlettered African voters shuffling across the horizon. I was so moved that I nearly cried.

Two days after the election, the whole world knew Mandela had been overwhelmingly elected the first black president of South Africa, without the aid of computers. There were no protests. The Afrikaner white establishment conceded quickly the end of apartheid.

Last Monday, I never felt more ashamed to be a citizen of the "freest democracy in Asia." Last Monday evening, we were just beginning to learn how to count the ballot honestly.

Heroism of our teachers

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY THE RESULTS of the voting in provinces like Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte, Maguindanao and Sulu are always the last to be reported, and why a "failure of elections" is always declared in these areas?

When we hear reports of power outages in these places, we smile cynically, knowing they're part of "black ops," and that a fix is in the making.

And yet, if we know all these, and the reasons they're taking place, why are they allowed to happen? And why do we allow it? More specifically, why do Comelec officials tolerate the practice?

You would think that, knowing what everyone else seems to know, the Comelec would try to fix the situation in Central and Southern Mindanao first before every election, sending their "best and brightest" and savviest operators there, and enlisting the help of the police and even the military, which the poll body has the power to do every election.

But every time there's an election, it's as if the violence and voting disruptions are taking place for the first time, with Comelec officials declaring "shock" or "dismay" or "outrage" at the events. The truth of the matter, though, is that these are only to be expected (and may have even been planned), and will in fact be used to justify the late arrival of results.

Every candidate, especially those in what independent senatorial aspirant Kiko Pangilinan calls "*dagdag-bawas* territory," meaning the 10th to 15th place in the early counts, knows there's still a chance to either clamber up or be dragged down the winning slate. That's why the count in Mindanao, especially in the ARMM, is always the last to arrive, because the results are still open for negotiations, for assignment to the highest bidders.

* * *

COMELEC Chair Benjamin Abalos was at great pains to emphasize that in general this year's polls were "peaceful and orderly," and without data with which to compare the number of killings, shootings and instances of intimidation in previous poll exercises, we can only take his word for it.

Malacañang officials even took the media to task for "focusing" on violent incidents, or on areas like Masbate where elections have a blood-drenched history.

But at least one official seems to be changing his tune. Monday afternoon, PNP Director General Oscar Calderon was declaring that everything was hunky-dory with the elections, saying that save for a few isolated incidents, it was, yes, "peaceful and orderly." But yesterday, in a press conference, he declared the PNP's determination to go "hammer and tongs" after the perpetrators of violence, adding that he meant to bring to justice those responsible for the 274 election-related killings or injuries.

Well, at least he's acknowledging that these incidents took place, and that, no matter if they do not constitute a pattern or systemic use of violence, at least he recognizes the need to bring to justice those responsible.

In other countries, especially in so-called mature democracies, elections take place without anyone dying or getting beaten up, or with such disturbing scenes as raids on precincts, standoffs at canvassing centers, or teachers getting shot while embracing ballot boxes.

* * *

THE LAST refers to the two teachers in Abra who got caught inside a jeepney while the vehicle was shot at by armed men. One teacher sustained gunshot wounds in the back when she fell while holding a ballot box in her arms, all in a desire to ensure the safety of the ballots she was taking from the precinct to the canvassing site.

There is indeed no gainsaying the heroism of our teachers. Staying in the country despite the low pay and thankless conditions, and the many temptations to work abroad, is heroism enough. But the work they put in during elections—lining up for election materials, manning (or rather, "womanning") the BEI desks at precincts, and then facing hardship, fatigue, long nights and actual physical danger during the counting of ballots and transporting of the ballot boxes—make all of them deserving of our gratitude and honors.

That's why it was so annoying to hear reports of teachers complaining of having to wait for hours before the Comelec would release the remainder of their allowances for election work. I mean, we ask too much already of our teachers to render extra work to supervise the voting process and the initial stages of the ballot counting. And then we deny them their just wages which are well-deserved and nowhere near compensatory for their difficulties and the dangers they face? Is there no limit to our officials' shame?

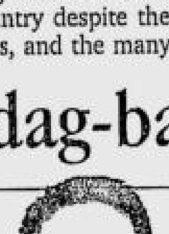
Education officials have long been lobbying to have teachers exempted from election duties. Teachers' organizations have added their voice to this clamor. But the reality is that the Comelec cannot by itself handle the work being carried out by our teachers—at least in the present manual election system. Computerization, I believe, would greatly reduce the need for an election workforce, and with instant transmission of results, it would also greatly reduce the risk to teachers and other personnel in transporting the boxes for canvassing. How do you hold up a computer, pray tell?

* * *

THE PUBLIC was somewhat taken aback by the early concession of congressional candidate Virgilio "Garci" Garcillano, even while the count in the first district of Bukidnon had yet to really take off.

Garci said he was conceding to his opponent Malou Acosta of the Liberal Party, but when I asked her brother, Neric, a candidate for Bukidnon governor, how Malou was doing, he said she's still "precarious" because the administration had launched "massive" special operations against them. The race in Bukidnon still bears watching.

First case of 'dagdag-bawas'?



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

THE COUNTING AND COLLATING OF ELECTion returns continue as I write this column. We are in the 21st century, the age of e-mail, i-Pods, laptops, wi-fi, electronic banking, and the most sophisticated multi-tasking phones you can imagine. But our ballots are still filled out and counted manually, the same way it was done in the last century. While computerized elections remain a possibility and will make counting faster, our mindset, unfortunately, remains manual. This is a clear case of how people sometimes cannot or will not cope with advances in technology.

Our antiquated *mano-mano* system reminded me of the elections of 1897, when Emilio Aguinaldo was elected president of a revolutionary government that replaced the Katipunan. Our Founding Fathers also used ballots that were manually filled out and counted. Unlike today when millions vote all over the archipelago, the men who met in the friar estate house in Tejeros was a smaller group and the result of the voting was presumably easier to canvass. What they did before (but which we cannot do today) was to do things viva voce. After electing some officials, including the president, they noticed that it turned dark and since nobody wanted to stay up all night filling up ballots and counting, they decided to dispense with the ballots. Earlier some electors alleged that the ballots had already been filled out prior to the election and not by the electors casting their votes. Voting viva voce was not done literally, with electors voicing out their votes. Neither did they raise their hands, which can be difficult to count if you have an armed and rowdy group in the hall.

Try to imagine the dynamics of the elections at Tejeros. When they dispensed with the ballots, they also dispensed with secrecy. Everything was laid bare as they divided the hall and had the electors stand on a spot corresponding to a particular candidate for a particular position. The electors literally had to stand on the side of the person they were electing, making the voting even more personal. It was this manner of voting, that electors literally lost face, but it was also a way for the nominee to see who his friends really were.

Had the elections been conducted viva voce from the beginning would the results have been different? Would Aguinaldo still have been president? What about Andres Bonifacio or the other nominees?

Eyewitness accounts state that Bonifacio garnered the second highest number of votes for president. If we were to go by trends like we do today, it would have been logical to think that Bonifacio would have been elected vice president. But this did not happen. To make matters worse, when Aguinaldo was elected president, a motion was made to automatically declare Bonifacio vice president based on the results, but nobody seconded the motion and nobody objected, so ballots were cast again.

If we are to believe that the ballots were already filled out, and that there was cheating, is it possible that they had the original *dagdag-bawas*? Unfortunately, the ballots are lost to history.

Where did these go? Were these verified? The Tejeros Convention simply proceeded until Bonifacio flared up when his election as secretary of the interior was challenged in a rude and direct manner. Our textbooks have oversimplified Tejeros as a temper tantrum by Bonifacio, further obliterating the painful but important lesson history should teach us about how to conduct elections. How should we conduct ourselves during elections?

Critics fault me for my so-called "negative view of history," but that is what the primary sources tell me. I'd like to think that while history can be positive and developmental, i.e. that history should inspire and elevate us, sometimes we also have to learn from what is base and uninspiring.

On March 23, 1897, the day after the Tejeros Convention, 45 men met, discussed and signed what we would call today an election protest, or, at best, a move to declare a failure of elections. History textbooks call this the Acta de Tejeros and it is merely a factoid to be used in a pop quiz or TV game shows. Few textbooks quote the sour opening passage that reads:

"We cannot accept the result [of the Tejeros Convention] because the same lacks legality. We have learned that actual pressure has been brought to bear upon our Presidency; and that the ballots have been prepared by one sole person and have been issued to unqualified persons in order to secure a majority; and we have learned what had conspired there. For this reason, we deny the validity of the action taken, the unlawfulness whereof is proven by the fact that they have been unable to prepare a formal minute record for our signatures, aside from the capital defect that our brother officers were not present there and were outside."

History is more complex than what our textbooks narrate. What really happened in Tejeros haunts us because it remains unresolved like contemporary election protests.

Don't blame history when it looks like it is doing a replay. We are to blame for repeating the past. When do we look truth in the face and take responsibility for what we have become since the Founding Fathers marred the first election?

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Elections as culture

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

PHILIPPINE ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN COMPARED—AND rightly so—to our fiestas, with their rough and tumble revelry. Or to a carnival, with side shows and cheap thrills and being taken for a ride.

I think the elections are more than festive events. They are now an integral part of Filipino culture. Let me do a bit of personal ethnography here to explain what I mean.

I arrived at the polling place around 7:30 in the morning, and was pleasantly surprised to find large crowds. Who says Filipinos are always late? We do have an early-bird syndrome that comes out when we face situations of scarcity, especially when we're talking about desirable goods. We see this early-bird syndrome at job fairs, for example, where there are only a handful of openings, or at parties where food is served buffet-style, the guests rushing up as soon as food is available, and piling their plates sky-high with food, fearful that there wouldn't be any left if they want seconds.

Elections trigger the early-bird syndrome in a different way. People anticipate problems of missing names, missing lists or even missing precincts. It's the same way we handle any government-related activity, for example, getting a birth certificate at the National Statistics Office. We go early to beat the crowds, and if something goes wrong, there's more time to unravel the problem and, hopefully, take care of everything in one day.

Gender, rituals

The early-bird syndrome probably also reflects how seriously we take elections. There's excitement about this political exercise which generates the fiesta-cum-carnival atmosphere. You can see that excitement in the composition of the voters: women and men of all ages, and quite a few elderly with their walking canes—even an occasional caregiver to help them along.

The ones managing the precincts were predominantly women. That probably reflects the gender distribution of our public school teachers, but I couldn't help but wonder, too, about gender roles, the women handling the most crucial tasks such as giving out and receiving the ballots. The men were assigned, you guessed it, to fingerprinting the voters and applying the indelible ink after someone had voted. Messy work, but simple enough for the male brain. Now, tell me if that isn't the way we often assign tasks in daily life.

The precincts reminded me of another aspect of local culture: our tendency to have too many people handling a fairly simple task. There were just too many people, including watchers. At the same time, I could understand that our elections have become a matter of watching the watchers. I didn't feel any tension in the place I voted, but I can imagine that in other parts of the country, the watchers had reason to be vigilant, given the potentials of fraud and violence.

The problem here is that the bulk of the work is still handled by one or two people, so everything moves at a snail's pace, sometimes made slower because there are too many people milling around and getting in each other's way. The lone male in my precinct looked bored, but had the initiative to go through our queue to check if the voters knew their identification numbers.

Many didn't have a voter's ID, which takes me to the haphazard way we do things. Although voters' registration took place a long time ago, the printing of the ID seemed almost arbitrary. My parents got their cards, but I didn't, although we registered together. I dropped by the local Comelec office a few days before the election and a member of the staff found my record on the computer monitor. You're there, he assured me, but they couldn't print out the ID because they didn't have the budget. I was told any ID would do.

In the end, no one ever asked me for an ID because they were too busy with all kinds of little rituals. We're very good at making simple things complicated. Each ballot, for example, had a number, which had to be copied on their form, which has always made me wonder about confidentiality. Sign here. Fingerprint here. Fingerprinting, incidentally, is a procedure that was originally intended for illiterates. It serves no purpose today except to make us feel we're doing something official.

After voting, the ballot stub has to be removed. Because some printing contractor made money again on bad perforations, the precinct people had to use scissors to cut the stubs. Time wasted again.

The ballot box had two compartments, one for the stub, one for the ballot itself. I saw one voter putting the stub in the wrong compartment. One of the schoolteachers shrugged and moved quickly, whipping out a key to unlock the compartment, pull out the stray ballot and then lock the box again. Rules, rules, rules—all made to be broken.

Filipino-style, we complain all the time about elections but deep down, we're really quite proud of our democratic system, the elections included. We're becoming more critical with our voting, more vigilant with safeguarding the vote. We're moving forward, despite the warlord-politicians in many parts of the country and in spite of the current Comelec.

Elections are the one time we go beyond rhetoric and demonstrate our appreciation of democracy. I'm always touched by the TV coverage of ballots being brought in from remote areas. Someone should do a documentary on how ballots are transported from the island municipalities of Sulu and Tawi-tawi, or the mountain communities of the Cordillera. We would also like to hear more about what the schoolteachers go through, including the story of Filomena Tatlonghari, the schoolteacher in Mabini, Batangas, who was shot to death after she refused to surrender the ballot box to armed men during the elections in 1995.

Elections speak of Philippine culture, and of the Filipino.

Agham

I'm still on elections but moving away from my ethnography. One of my anthropology graduate students, Erika Rey, wrote about the confusion around Agham. In a column last Friday, I had mentioned Agham as a party-list organization of people from the science and technology sector and gave www.agham.org as the organization's website.

It turns out that website belongs to another Agham, to which Erika belongs. The organization was established in 1997, with a long full name: Samahan ng Nagtataguyod ng Agham at Teknolohiya para sa Sambayanan. Its chair is Dr. Giovanni Tapang, a physicist teaching at the University of the Philippines.

Erika sent a press statement dated May 10 describing their group as a "national organization of scientists, engineers and advocates dedicated to make science and technology serve the people through direct community service and advocacy." The organization has taken an advocacy role around issues like power rate increases, oil price hikes, Balikatan, the proposed tax on texting. They have also participated in congressional hearings on issues like mining, genetic engineering and the budget for science. This Agham emphasizes they are not running as a party-list organization and instead endorses Bayan Muna.

'A murder too many' but fewer

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE editorial "Killing season." (INQUIRER, 5/3/07)

Indeed, one murder is a murder too many. And it is no consolation that there are fewer election-related violent incidents and deaths this election than in previous elections.

What is clear is that there were fewer incidents and casualties this year than in 2004. Had we not taken away 1,869 firearms, 186 explosive devices and 310 deadly weapons from the hands of 2,012 arrested persons and 31 slain suspects who could have spoiled the otherwise honest, orderly and peaceful elections, there could have been more violence and more deaths.

Also significant is the fact that our election security measures had a direct effect on the national crime situation as shown in the marked decline in crime incidence in the first four months of this year.

It might be of public interest that during this year's election, the Philippine National Police was the sole deputized agency of the Comelec to carry out the herculean task of securing the electoral process. In past elections this was a joint responsibility of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the PNP.

Numbers also describe the whole picture. The 115,000-strong PNP was faced with the awesome task of providing security to 89,000 polling centers, 87,000 candidates, thousands of election officers and deputized teachers, a thousand tons of election materials and forms, and over 40 million voters. But despite the odds, we take pride in the modest accomplishments that we have posted.

As far as prosecution of suspects involved in election-related violent incidents is concerned, there had been several significant breakthroughs in out investigations. We are confident that in the post-election phase of our security operations, we can focus more on the investigation and prosecution of suspects involved in all these cases of election-related violent incidents.

Rest assured the PNP is doing everything humanly possible within the limits of our resources and capability to enforce the law and protect our citizens.

—SAMUEL D. PAGDILAO JR.,
police chief superintendent
andspokesperson,
Philippine National Police,
Camp Crame, Quezon City

Unfair conclusions re Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

IN HIS MAY 10 COLUMN, CONrado Banal III made some incorrect and, therefore, unfair conclusions about the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

- Republic Act 7653 (The New Central Bank Act) expressly prohibits the Bangko Sentral from revealing information about the condition of specific banks or institutions. Therefore, it was unfair and incorrect for him to say that the Bangko Sentral is sleeping on the job just because we do not make public our findings from our regular examination of the banks' compliance with banking laws and regulations, as well as on their adherence to prudent banking and risk management practices.
- As a printer of Philippine passports, it is our responsibility to adhere to the quality requirements and standards of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Records will show that while the quality of laminates from other suppliers does not meet the DFA's standards, that of the laminates supplied by Arjo Wiggins in accordance with procurement rules has been consistently satisfactory.

—JUAN DE ZUÑIGA JR.,
assistant governor
and general counsel,
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas,
A. Mabini St., Malate, Manila

The INQUIRER received another letter from Nestor B. Salanio, officer in charge of the Bangko Sentral's Security Plant Complex, giving practically the same explanation as the above on the matter of laminates; the letter though was in reaction to an earlier column (April 26) of Banal.—Ed.

No action, just complete silence from Ombudsman

ON JUNE 28, 2006, WE FILED with the Office of the Ombudsman a complaint against a former presiding judge and his sheriff for falsification of public documents and malversation of public funds and property.

On Sept. 7, 2006, we wrote Victor Z. Fernandez, deputy ombudsman for Luzon, inquiring about any action on the case and about its status.

We are disappointed that, to date, we have not heard anything about our complaint. We have not received any notice setting the preliminary investigation or any proceedings. There simply has been no action on the case on the part of the Ombudsman's office.

—REX G. RICO,
4/F Cattleya Condominium,
235 Salcedo St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Global warming caused by greed

THE INQUIRER'S APRIL 13 EDItorial on global warming (INQUIRER, 4/13/07) came at a most opportune time. Global warming stares us in the face and unless we put our act together, we might as well say goodbye to Mother Earth.

Indeed, the technological and industrial advances since the Industrial Revolution have resulted in the emission of more greenhouse gasses and chlorofluorocarbon, which have thickened the world's thermal blanket, thus trapping more heat in the earth's atmosphere and resulting in higher global temperatures; and, in turn, in the melting of polar ice, rise in sea level, coastal flooding, more tropical storms, disappearance of ecological niche, extinction of species and other horrendous events.

A move to remedy global warming—by reducing the emission of greenhouse gasses mainly by decreasing the consumption of oil and fossil fuels—was initiated by several countries in 1997. This agreement is now known as the Kyoto Protocol. Unfortunately, the efforts of the 125 countries that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol have been effectively nullified by the selfishness of the United States, the bastion of capitalism. Arguing that such a move could destroy its industries and ultimately its economy, the United States has refused to abide with the Kyoto Protocol. This is ironical, given that the United States accounts for about one-fourth of the world's greenhouse gases.

It is obvious that it is capitalist greed which has prevented the world from adopting a common solution to global warming. This unregulated lust for profit, which is the orientation of the prevailing capitalist system, needs to be reined in, if we want Mother Earth, along with mankind, to survive.

—REMIGIO D. SALADERO JR.,
Pro-Labor Legal Assistance
Center, 33-B E. Rodriguez Ave., QC

Estradas still loved by people

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS story written by INQUIRER reporter Kristine Alave.

I don't owe anybody an explanation. Neither is there a need for me to enumerate our local administration's accomplishments in the past six years because my constituents can readily attest to what we have done for the municipality. The people, not Alave, are the most and the only credible evaluators of our performance as leaders of San Juan.

There's no doubt that my father, President Joseph Estrada, San Juan's former mayor and our former president, was well-loved and continues to be loved by people not only in San Juan but also in other parts of the country. It was not his 17 years of service as mayor of San Juan that launched his national political career (as Alave sees it); it was his selfless service, love for the masses and his unprecedented achievements that paved the way for him to serve the nation as senator, vice president and president.

The nation trusted and loved Erap because of what he did for San Juan and its people. The legacy that he left in our municipality, his kind of leadership, his appeal to the masses, his adeptness in government service have, undoubtedly, become my winning voucher during my entry into San Juan politics in 2001. But having garnered the largest number of votes ever cast in the history of San Juan, in 2004, there might be other reasons for my reelection in 2004 which are more worthy of mention than Alave's baseless and irrational remarks. The last two elections proved that the people are satisfied with my performance. I ran virtually unopposed this year.

If Alave has not been to San Juan for the past few years or has not gone shopping at the very popular Greenhills Shopping Center, she is missing a lot. San Juan has been recognized as the "Most Progressive Municipality" in the Philippines by no less than the Commission on Audit, and has been tagged as the municipality with the "least percentage of poverty incidence" by the National Statistics Coordinating Board. These are just some of the notable feats of my administration.

I must admit that it was my father who made San Juan a very renowned municipality, but we must also admit that the San Juaneños would not have been supporting my very own and unique leadership had I not done significant and efficient projects for my town.

Lastly, there's no truth that the people are fed up with the Estradas. If there are people who may have even the slightest reasons to dislike me, the May 14 elections confirmed that my unprecedented accomplishments (which have put San Juan, soon to become a city, to its most progressive state) are the very reasons why the Estradas are still loved, trusted and respected by the people.

—JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO,
mayor, San Juan, Metro Manila

A violent cry for attention

THE BEHEADING OF SEVEN civilians by the Abu Sayyaf was a violent cry for attention but it was unnecessary. We have been aware of the Abu Sayyaf for so long, yet the group seems to be asking for more.

The beheading was the more cruel and "barbaric," as Conrado de Quiros described it, because it included two teenagers. (INQUIRER, 4/23/07) The killing of innocent children by the Abu Sayyaf terrorists showed them to be more evil.

Don't these terrorists have children of their own? Only a person without a heart can do what they did, and the beheading revealed the kind of people they are. They killed kids who had a future to build, and who could have grown up to become the very leaders who could resolve the Abu Sayyaf's grievances.

The Abu Sayyaf is acting on impulse; its operatives are running wild and they can't see that with their terrorist acts, they are trampling on the very causes they are fighting for.

—JEN MIGUEL,
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Fraud seen in Eastern Samar canvass

Missing Comelec seals alarm PPCRV watchers

By Cyrain Cabueñas
Inquirer Visayas

BORONGAN, EASTERN SAMAR—CONCERNED citizens expressed alarm over the absence of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) logo on election returns (ERs) in almost all precincts in Eastern Samar municipalities, where the province's governor and Team Unity media director Ben Evardone predicted a 12-0 outcome for TU.

After the voting closed 3 p.m. Monday, text messages and calls from hundreds of volunteers and poll watchers complaining about the ERs without the Comelec seal flooded Borongan's diocesan media office, the headquarters of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV).

PPCRV coordinator seminarian Edmel Raagas said he noticed the plain ERs while monitoring the 90 precincts of Oras town.

"I raised the issue to the BEIs (board of election inspectors) and to the Comelec officer and the counting of votes at the precincts were momentarily stopped."

Election officer Wenilyn Carilla of Guiuan town found the incident puzzling.

Carilla said the logo may not be so clear but it has to bear the Comelec insignia.

"I even compared the ER of 2004 with the ER of 2007 and the former has a Comelec logo while the latter has none," she said.

MacArthur town election officer Greta Garcia observed that while ordinary envelopes from the region have Comelec seals, the ERs do not have Comelec logos. The problem was brought to provincial Comelec supervisor Juan Bautista.

Bautista said it could just be a printing error by the National Printing Office.

Assistant regional Comelec director Jose Nick Mendros confirmed Bautista's claim.

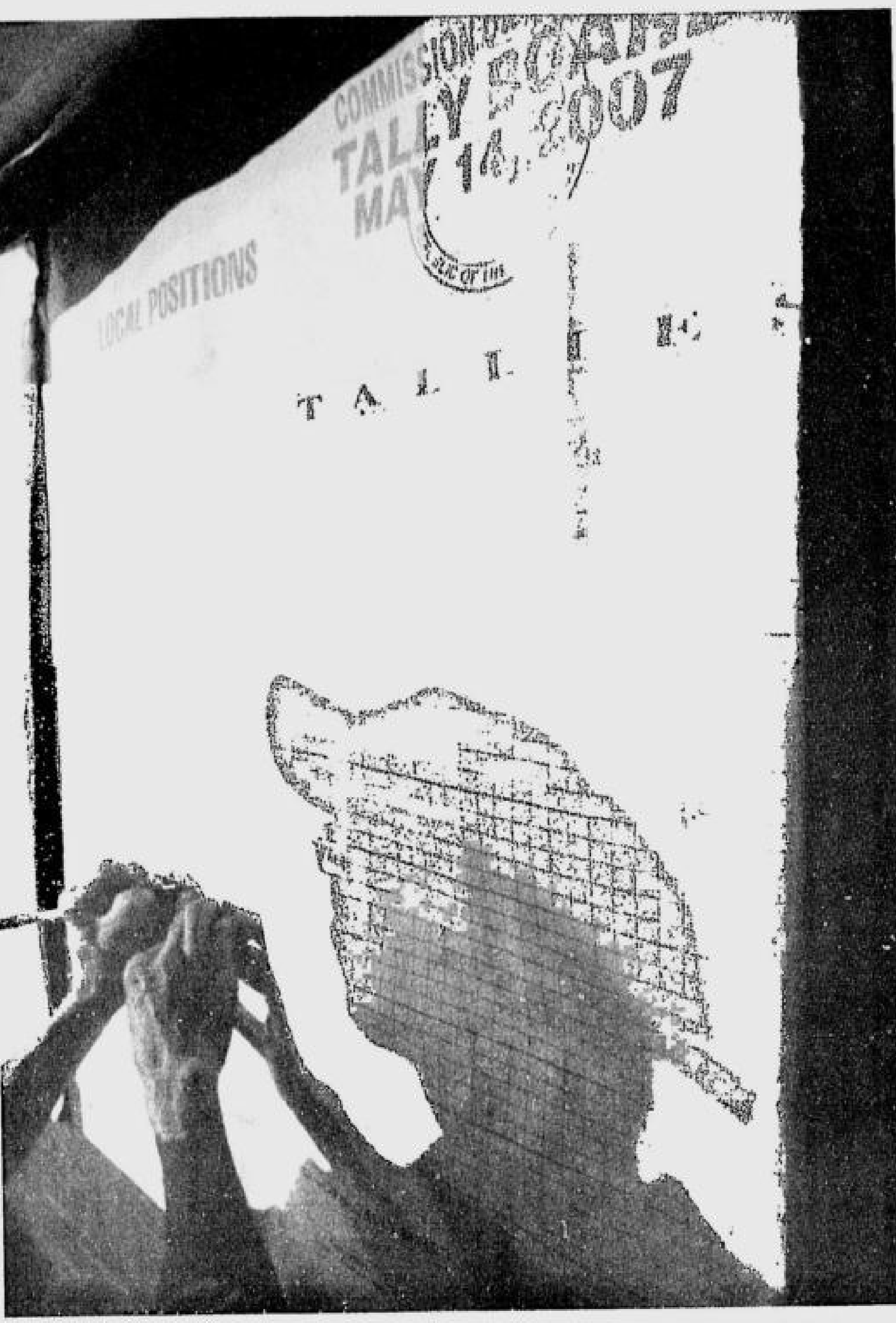
Mendros said some ERs might have logos while others might have none and the logo appears almost invisible because it is watermarked.

"Almost all the ERs in Eastern Samar have no logo and maybe in all other provinces as well but what's important is not the absence of the logo but the presence of the serial number," he said.

The clergy of Borongan said there was reason to be alarmed, though.

"The exposed Oplan Mercury Rising of Bantay Boto may have a grain of truth as well as the text messages about sightings of ballot boxes in some municipalities weeks before the elections," said a concerned cathedral parish priest Fr. Euly Belizar.

A group of retired police and military generals have earlier claimed that the administration was to stage a well-organized cheating nationwide in the May 14 elections under the so-called "Oplan Mercury Rising" to ensure the win of the administration's Team Unity senatorial slate.



THE SHADOW of cheating hovers over the canvassing of results of the just concluded elections for senator. In Davao City, those in charge of the counting proceed with the canvass in the dark after an outage.
BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Comelec declares mayoral winners in 3 provinces

ILAGAN, ISABELA—THE COMMISSION ON Elections has proclaimed eight winning mayoral candidates in Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Abra and Benguet yesterday.

In Isabela, proclaimed were reelectionist Angadanan Mayor Jose Panganiban Jr., who ran unopposed, and reelectionist Dinapigue Mayor Renato Candido, who won over his closest rival by eight votes.

Comelec records showed that Candido received 978 votes while his closest rival, Reynaldo Dirige, got 970 votes. A third candidate, Herminio Domincel, got 410 votes.

In Abra, the Comelec proclaimed four winning mayoral candidates on Tuesday. They are Placido Eduarte Jr. of Tayum town, Geraldine Balbuena of Peñarrubia town, Marjorie Lagen of Villaviciosa town and Noel Castillo of Langiden town.

In Benguet, reelectionist Mayor Bony Tacio was proclaimed also on Tuesday.

In Nueva Vizcaya, reelectionist Diadi Mayor Marvic Padilla, who ran unopposed, was also proclaimed on Tuesday.

Former Comelec Commissioner Ralph Lantion conceded defeat to his closest rival in the lone congressional district race in Nueva Vizcaya, former Rep. Carlos Padilla.

"We offered them what we think is the best platform of government but the people have spoken. Let us respect it. While we are in grief, we thank everyone for their support," said Lantion, whose mother Rizalina died on Sunday.

Partial and unofficial results from the quick count being done by the National Movement for Free Elections here on Tuesday showed that Padilla was leading with more than 4,000 votes against Lantion.

In Baguio City, former Councilor Edgardo Bilog died after a heart attack on Tuesday, just when his votes pulled him up to the top 12 candidates for councilor.

Bilog, a Kampi candidate, died while being taken to the St. Louis University Sacred Heart Hospital at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday. *With reports from Villamor Visaya Jr., Ben Moses Ebreo, Vincent Cabreza and Frank Cimatu, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Poor to cash in on trash from elections

LUCENA CITY—FOR THE throngs of urban poor settlers in this city, gathering "cashable" election wastes is more important than waiting for the announcement of poll winners.

"We will be just wasting our time staring on that election tally board. Anyway, it will not make a difference in our lives," Felipe Balado, 58, said, pointing to the tally board of the National Movement for Free Elections inside the church plaza early Tuesday.

Balado tore down campaign posters along Quezon Avenue with the help of his two young grandsons.

Showing the bundles of bamboo sticks and pieces of wood in one corner of the sidewalk, which they have detached from carton and cloth campaign posters, Balado said it would serve as firewood for their stone stove inside their shack in a squatters' area in the outskirts of the city.

He pointed to the big tarpaulin poster of a gubernatorial candidate in the next street corner.

"We will try to tear that tarpaulin in the middle of the night. That thing will serve us a lot of purpose. Hopefully, the police will not arrest us if they catch us. Those campaign posters are now useless, anyway" he said.

"Please, just leave us alone," he said.

On Monday, an enterprising youngster was spotted collecting sample ballots and campaign materials scattered outside the Cotta Elementary School.

"The volume of paper trash is less in this election. Maybe, the candidates had no more money," said Renato Guzman, a school dropout.

He said he would sell the collected election trash in the nearby junk shop for P3 per kg.

During the campaign period, no other sector here eagerly awaited the tearing down of illegally posted campaign materials than the urban settlers.

The gatherers said they planned to sell the items they collect out of the election trash. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Cash flow from bets gives voters sudden buying power

By Cynthia Borgueta-Pease, Jolene R. Bulambot, David Israel Sinay, Nestor P. Burgos and Hazel P. Villa
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—SOME VOTERS IN Tacloban City enjoyed the post-Election Day spending the money they got from candidates who bought their votes. But the situation remained tense among candidates and their supporters as the canvassing of votes continued in many areas in the Visayas.

Supermarkets in Tacloban City on Tuesday reaped the benefits of the massive vote buying by candidates of different parties when shoppers went into a buying frenzy.

The residents here flocked to supermarkets and groceries. Crisp 1,000, 500, 200, 100, 50 and 20 peso bills are common sights as these are the ones usually used as payment.

Celso, a resident of this city, immediately bought two pairs of blue jeans as he got P2,000 from the candidates he voted for on Monday.

DESPITE his disablity, Mang Kinkin casts his vote in La Paz, Iloilo City.
ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

"I only went to my assigned precinct when it was about 3 p.m. as I know I will be receiving a bigger amount than if I went there early," he told the INQUIRER.

Another voter, a jeep driver, immediately bought P1,000 worth of grocery items after the paymaster of the candidate he voted for gave him the amount. "This is for our three days consumption," he said in Waray.

Voters in Tacloban might have enjoyed their day but the municipal election officer in Sogod, Southern Leyte had to ask for security from the National Bureau of Investigation in Tacloban City after he received several death threats since Sunday.

The NBI sent at least five agents to Sogod to provide security to Sogod election officer Dennis Dublado.

Dublado said he had to ask for security from another agency and not from the local police to avoid accusations of being biased.

He said the threats came after the Commission on Elections (Comelec) provincial office disapproved the request to have him transferred to another town.

"I was accused of being biased by some political groups, which is really a baseless accusations. I had to ask for security from the NBI while doing the canvassing and until there's already a proclamation," Dublado said.

He earlier questioned the presence of soldiers in the mountain barangays, as well as the military checkpoints being conducted without authority from the Comelec.

A report on the incident was already sent to the Comelec en banc, he said.

Since yesterday, military checkpoints were already removed but some soldiers were assigned near the town's gymnasium where the canvassing of election results is being conducted, said Lt. Col. Mario Lacurom, commanding officer of the 43rd Infantry Battalion.

Lacurom also denied statements made by mayoral candidate retired Col. George Rabosa that the soldiers in the mountain barangays were there to secure him.

"The military is apolitical. We are doing checkpoints to maintain peace and order during the elections," he said.

Early results showed brothers JC Rahman and Felipe Nava ahead of their rivals by some 8,000 votes in the five towns of Guimaras province.

Businessman and publisher Bernie Miague said he would not concede defeat and that he would file charges of vote buying against the Navas.

In Estancia town, Iloilo, the police arrested two supporters of mayoral candidates Rene Cordero and Restituto Mosqueda for gun possession.

The election supervisor of Antique said he does not foresee the proclamation of any candidate running for provincial posts before Friday as the counting of votes continued at the precinct and municipal levels.

Romualdez leads in Leyte race for House seat

LAWYER FERDINAND MARTIN G. Romualdez, a fresh face in the local political horizon, appeared all set to clinch a congressional seat as he garnered 85 percent of the votes counted Monday night.

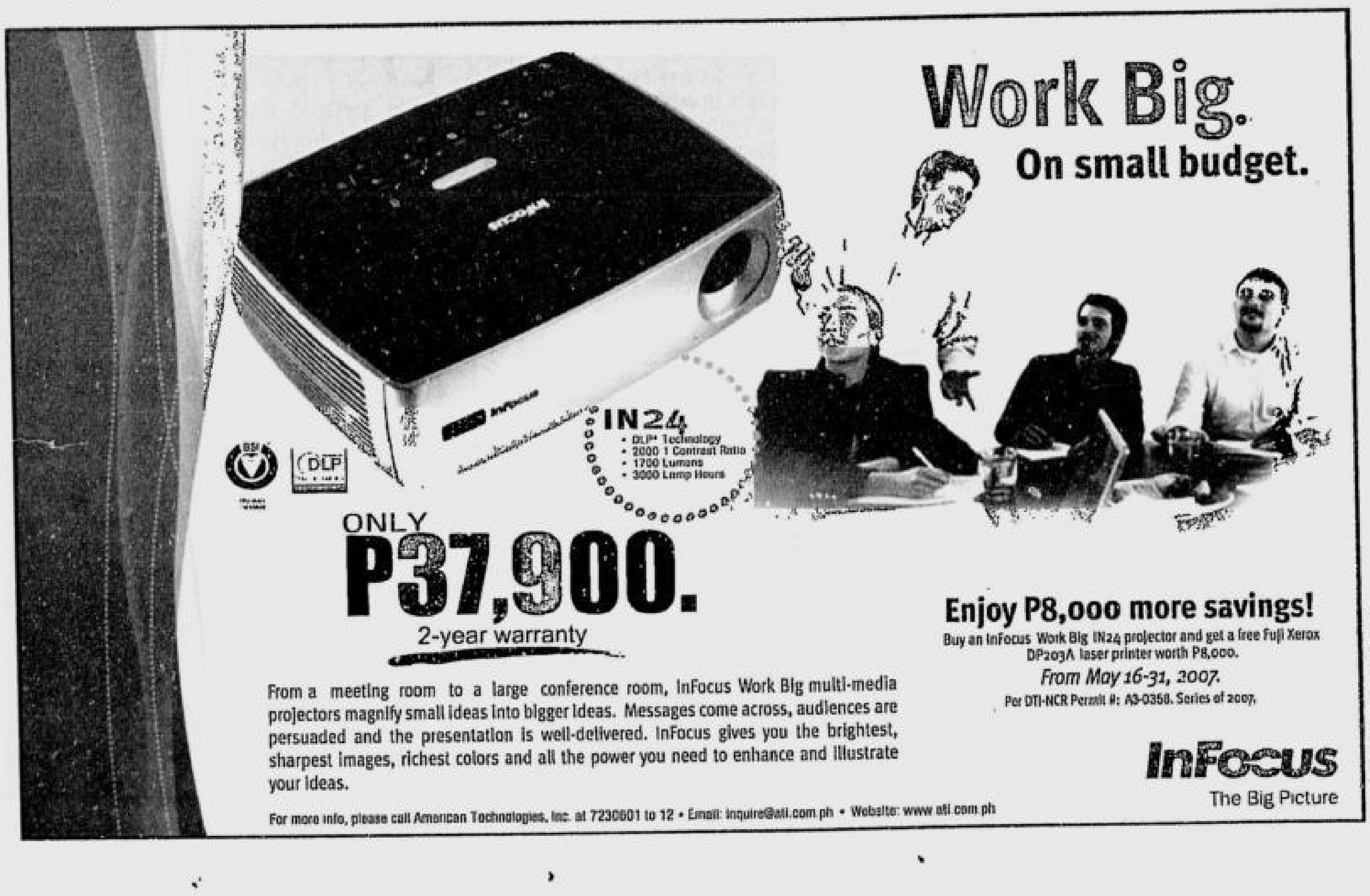
Running under Kampi, the lawyer-banker son of former Leyte Gov. Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez was pulling away from independent candidate Fiel Clemencio in the race for a congressional seat in the first district of Leyte.

In a press statement, a supporter of Martin was quoted as saying the trend in the counting is in his favor.

The first district composed of Tacloban City and seven towns—Sta. Fe, San Miguel, Alang-Alang, Tanuan, Babatngon, Tolosa and Palo—has a little over 200,000 voters.

Forty-three percent of the voters come from this city.

If elected, the young Romualdez vowed to deliver the essential services the people in his district need and help bring back the old glory of the province.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'Man with a bird's nest of a beard' shares his wisdom

By Roland Rabang
Contributor

TOMMY HAFALLA HAS LONG BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE CULtural Center of the Philippines through its Thirteen Artists award for his contributions in the field of photography, but more than this, he is a cultural activist.

PHOTOGRAPHER-artist Tommy Hafalla (middle) converts a clearing near the Bao-eng burial sites at Sagada's Echo Valley into a classroom to talk about photography and "ways of seeing" before a group of Manila-based students. ROLAND RABANG

In Sagada, Mt. Province, where he spends most of his time when not in Baguio, residents call him Obonan. Freelance writer Elizabeth Lolarga translated that to mean "the man with a bird's nest of a beard."

Hafalla can also be called a teacher. "I don't have a title before or after my name," he said while setting up photographic equipment at the St. Mary's Convent in Sagada for a workshop for local residents.

He lent his services for free along with volunteers from the International Council for Photography (ICP) which has a chapter in Batangas.

The idea of teaching photography to locals was hatched when Hafalla held a free workshop in Mt. Province. The ICP staff told him that they shared his vision so they suggested expanding the workshop venue to Sagada.

The ICP provided film, photo paper, photo enlarger, film developing tanks and reels. Hafalla offered his personal gear for the workshop held in the first quarter of this year. The participants, equipped with point-and-shoot cameras, delivered black and white images.

Notwithstanding the limitation of not having single-lens reflex cameras for students' use, Hafalla said this lack did not hamper learning.

"We would have to provide them first with a way of seeing," he said. "An SLR would have been good, but the need for it was not that urgent."

Crash program

Converting one of the rooms in the convent into a makeshift darkroom, he tried to carry out a crash program in photography that included chemistry in film and paper developing, fixing, toning and archiving.

"We hope this will provide a spark among the locals to keep a visual record of the changing cultural patterns among the indigenous communities for future historical reference," Hafalla said.

His documentation of the Cordillera way of life has resulted in many local and international solo and group exhibits the latest of which is "Lifted Images," ongoing until May 20 at the Heritage Art Center, Artwalk, fourth level, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. This latest show is under the auspices of the artists' group Sanayan Lapat Kamay Foundation Inc.

Hafalla said a question often asked of him by viewers of his exhibits is this: "What authority do you have to speak for ethno-linguistic groups?"

"They must think I have a Ph.D. in anthropology," he said. "But what I have is mere fingertip knowledge of the ways around here culled from years of living with the community."

Hafalla is one of the authoritative figureheads of *dap-ay* (tribunal) Akikis of Demang in Sagada. He was adopted by the community in 1986 and given the name Kaga.

Dumbfounded

He was invited to be a member of a panel of reactors in a convention on indigenous culture in Vigan. "The credentials of the participants were intimidating. They had Ph.D. and master's degrees. But when I was asked to respond to a particular cultural object, the *bulol*, they were dumbfounded."

Hafalla said the *bulol*, a squat, expressionless carved human figure often mistaken for a Cordillera rice god, thus a metaphor for fertility, is a ritual ornament crafted by Ifugao artisans for a healing procedure performed on sick farmers.

The blood of butchered ritual animals is poured on the figure during the ritual as an act of transferring whatever illness that befell the patient on the *bulol*.

"After the ritual, the figure is often useless to a point of being used as firewood," Hafalla said. "Some locals decide to keep it in their rice granaries as a reminder to a would-be robber that sickness or even death could befall the person if he continues his bad intentions. This must be the reason that prompted some people to mistakenly regard the statue for a rice god."

The *bulol* is now appropriated as an ornament in pop-mainstream culture. "One time I even saw the image being used as a trophy in an awards ceremony for film. What does that symbolize? That the film industry is sick?" Hafalla asked.

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'Binongey' for special occasions

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Anda, Pangasinan

SOMETIME IN THE PAST, long before the days of clay pots and stainless pans, people must have used bamboos to cook rice.

Bamboos are still used as cooking wares in the island town of Anda in Pangasinan but only to cook *binongey*, a rice cake made of glutinous rice and coconut milk.

The town celebrated its Third Binongey Festival recently to revive its cultural heritage and also to promote its luscious mangoes that abundantly grow on the island.

"Binongey and mango go deliciously together," said Mayor Nestor Pulido.

He said carabao mangoes produced in Anda have fleshy and succulent pulp, have an exceptionally sweet-tangy taste and are not at all fibrous.

Elizabeth Tomas, the town's agricultural officer, said the good quality of the mangoes is attributed to the soil which is sandy-loam with limestone.

She said every summer, which is the mango season, water is short on the island and thus the fruits retain their sugar content.

So summer means a time for mangoes and *binongey* in Anda, whose name is derived from "maganda" (beautiful).

Binongey takes long hours of preparation and cooking. This could be the reason Anda folk cook it only during special occasions like fiestas and family celebrations.

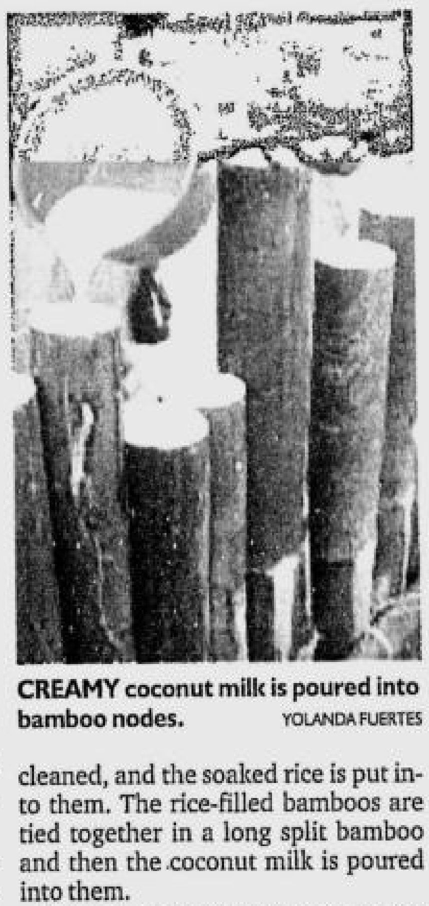
Cultural heritage

Neighboring town Bolinao has commercialized this *merienda* (snack) fare but in Anda the cultural heritage dictates that it is cooked only during special occasions, said Joey Celso, a local government employee.

Binongey products are also given as gifts during parties, are sold to raise funds in popularity contests, and even to raise money for benefit projects.

On Thursday night, while residents enjoyed a night of music and stage shows at the city plaza, *binongey* in bamboo wedges were distributed for free to them, along with sliced mangoes and coconut jam.

The procedure for cooking *binongey* includes washing the glutinous rice and soaking it for half a day, grating coconuts and extracting the milk.



CREAMY coconut milk is poured into bamboo nodes. YOLANDA FUERTES

The bamboos are cut to a desired length (one or two nodes) and cleaned, and the soaked rice is put into them. The rice-filled bamboos are tied together in a long split bamboo and then the coconut milk is poured into them.

"You should not stuff too much rice in the bamboos, or it would not be fluffy and soft. You must use year-old bamboos, not younger or older," Celso said.

INQGRAPH: LOUIE BACANI

ELEKSYON 2007

CAR

ABRA

Governor (PPCRV as of 10 am)	
BERSAMIN, Eustaquio (Kampi)	36390
VALERA, Ma. Zita (PDSP)	19187

Vice Governor (PPCRV as of 10 am)	
BAROÑA, Victorino Jr. (PDSP)	16517
DUMASEN, Marlyn (Lakas)	9114
PARUGGANAN, Ramon (Kampi)	12726

BENGUET

Governor (Comelec as of 11:45 am)	
FONGWAN, NESTOR (Kampi)	7523
MELCHOR, BORROMEO (Lakas-CMD)	6216
TABANDA, EDNA (LDP)	3035

Congressman (Comelec as of 11:45 am)	
COSALAN, RONALD (LDP)	6919
DANGWA, SAMUEL (Lakas-CMD)	9013
GUZNIAN, BEDIS (Ind.)	

BAGUIO CITY (Comelec as of 3:30 pm, 253 precincts)

Congressman (lone district)	
DOMOGAN, Mauricio (Lakas-CMD)	8049
KINDIPAN, Ramon (Ind.)	58
MOLINTAS, Jose Mencio (NPC-UNO)	6302
TAYENGCO, Thomas (KBL)	208

Mayor (AMA Quick Count)	
BAUTISTA, Reinaldo Jr. (Kampi)	5164
BAUTISTA, Virgilio (Ind)	170
HERNANDEZ, Guillermo (Ind)	55
LABO, Ramon (KBL)	800
NEVADA, Elmo (PRP)	1054
RAMOS, Felipe (Ind)	78
VERGARA, Bernardo (Lakas/NPC)	2879
YANGOT, Leandro Jr. (LP)	2657
YARANON, Braulio (LDP-UNO)	2907

IFUGAO

Governor (PPCRV as of 3 pm)	
BAGUILAT, Teodoro Jr. (LP)	19660
BALITANG, Eugene (LDP)	1865
PRUDENCIANO, Glenn (Lakas-CMD)	17258

MOUNTAIN PROVINCE

Governor (Namfrel as of 2:20 pm)	
DOMINGUEZ, Harry (Ind)	628
DALOG, Maximo (Lakas-CMD)	1883
LACWASAN, Bonifacio Jr. (Kampi)	1909

Vice Governor (Namfrel as of 2:20 pm)	
DOMINGUEZ, Benjamin (Ind)	2299
CLAVER, Louis Jr. (Ind)	1850

Congressman (lone) (Namfrel as of 2:20 pm)	
MALINIAS, Sario (LP)	55
DOMINGUEZ, Jupiter (Ind)	2285
LINGWA, Efren Joseph (Ind)	2
PILANDO, Arnulfo (Partido Liberal)	1131
DOMINGUEZ, Victor (Kampi)	1046
SIBLAWAN, Francisco (Ind)	
AFADCHAY, Carlito (Ind)	

ILOCOS REGION

ILOCOS NORTE

Governor (PPCRV as of 2:30 p.m., 394 precincts)	
KEON, Michael (Kampi)	34369
FARIÑAS, Rodolfo (NPC)	22651

Congressman (1st district) (PPCRV as of 2:30 p.m., 285 precincts)	
ABLAN, Roque Jr. (Lakas)	19501
SALES, Reynolan (PMP)	18662
VENTURA, Cesar (PDP-Laban)	185

Congressman (2nd district) (PPCRV as of 2:30 p.m., 145 precincts)	
MARCOS, Ferdinand Jr. (KBL)	13345

LAOAG CITY (PPCRV as of 11:30 a.m.)

Mayor	
ALBANO, Rowland (LP)	3056
BRILLANTE, Simon (KBL)	5
FARINAS, Michael (Kampi)	7453
GARMA, Joseph (Aksyon Demokratiko)	

ILOCOS SUR

Governor (Comelec as of 4pm, 1047 precincts)	
RAFANAN, Efren (PMP)	81340
SAVELLANO, Deogracias Victor (Lakas)	82534
SISON, Roque (Ind)	324

Vice Governor (Comelec as of 4pm, 1047 precincts)	
CORDERO, Estelita (UNO)	42452
SINGSON, Jeremias (Lakas)	93917

Congressman (1st district) (Comelec as of 4pm, 1047 precincts)	
BATERINA, Bertrand (LP)	14720
SINGSON, Ronald (Lakas)	17798

Congressman (2nd district) (Comelec as of 4pm, 1047 precincts)	
ANTOLIN, Ernesto (Ind)	869
CAPELA, Henry (Ind)	2167
SINGSON, Eric (LP)	97139

CANDON CITY (Comelec as of 4 pm, 1047 precincts)

Mayor	
SINGSON, Allen (Lakas)	18587
VIROCEL, Wilfredo (Ind)	617

LA UNION

Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BALINGIT, Jesus (Ind)	119
DUMPIT, Tomas (Kampi)	1943
ORTEGA, Carlos (Ind)	609
ORTEGA, Manuel (NPC)	8792

Vice Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
DE GUZMAN, Eulogio Clarence Martin III (NPC)	7366
DULAY, Robert (PDP-Laban)	448
ORROS, Justo III (Kampi)	3855

Congressman (1st district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
MAGSAYSAY, Milagros (Kampi)	906
ORTEGA, Victor Francisco (Lakas)	9771

SAN FERNANDCO CITY (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm.)

Mayor	
FLORES, Godofredo (Kampi)	9988
ORTEGA, Pablo (Lakas)	1016

PANGASINAN

Governor	
AGBAYANI, Jamie Eloise (Ind)	16914
CAPULONG, Modesto (Ind)	187
ESPINO, Amado Jr. (Kampi)	17466
LAMBINO, Oscar (Lakas)	3520
PADILLA, Bartolome (Ind)	61
SEBASTIAN, Reynaldo (Ind)	24

Vice Governor	
PRIMICIAS, Marlyn (Kampi)	17906
VILLAR, Dionisio (Lakas)	15853

Congressman (1st district)	
BRAGANZA, Alberto (LDP)	1911
CELESTE, Arturo (Kampi)	5629

Congressman (2nd district) (PPCRV as of 12 noon)	
AGBAYANI, Victor (Lakas)	2667
BENGZON, Jose III (Kampi)	613
BERNARDO-LOKIN, Ma. Blanca Kim (NPC)	1298

Congressman (4th district)	
DE VENECIA, Jose Jr. (Lakas)	12924
LIM, Benjamin (PDP-Laban)	8840
SIAPNO, Juan Jr.	21

Congressman (5th district)	
COJUANGCO, Marcos (NPC)	25435

DAGUPAN CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
FERNANDEZ, Alipio Jr. (Lakas)	13035
LIM, Mark Brian (PDP-Laban)	7656

ALAMINOS CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BRAGANZA, Hernani (Lakas)	4474
MANZANO, Cesar (Kampi)	3713

URDANETA CITY (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)

Mayor	
PEREZ, Amadeo Jr. (NPC)	27771
QUELISA, Jimmy (Ind)	388

CAGAYAN VALLEY

CAGAYAN

Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
ANTONIO, Alvaro (Lakas)	5741
CALIMAG, Sherwin (Ind)	14
DE LOS SANTOS, Joven (Ind)	45
ESPINOSA, Eladio (Ind)	58
LARA, Edgar (NPC)	5245
PEREZ, Jose (Ind)	60

Vice Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
ASPERELA, Fernando (Ind)	552
CAYOSA, Domingo (Ind)	3475
FAUSTO, Leonides (LP)	1665
FERNANDEZ, Estrella (Ind)	517
PAGULAYAN, Oscar Jr (LDP)	2048
PASCUAL, Florante (NPC)	2444
SANTOS, Bernie (Ind)	84

Congressman (3rd district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
MAMBA, Manuel (LP)	2475
TING, Randolph (Lakas)	8123

ISABELA

Governor (Comelec as of 8 a.m.)	
DY, Benjamin (NPC)	11816
PADACA, Maria Gracia Cielo (LP)	10845

Vice Governor	
REYES, Ramon (Lakas).	11754
UY, Mercedes (NPC)	8574

Congressman (1st district)	
ALBANO, Rodolfo III (Kampi)	5148
SOLIVEN, Stephen (UNO)	54

Congressman (2nd district)	
CALDERON, Benedict (NPC)	1045
UY, Edwin (Lakas)	1582

Congressman (3rd district)	
DY, Faustino III (NPC)	1582
FELIPE, Marianito (KBL)	68
NIETO, Raul (Ind)	6

Congressman (4th district)	
AGGABAO, Giorgidi (UNO)	522
MIRANDA, Anthony (Kampi)	616

SANTIAGO CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
MIRANDA, Jose Sr. (Kampi)	2395
NAVARRO, Amelita (Lakas)	4018
TAN, Armando (LP)	3429

CAUYAN CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
DY, Caesar (NPC)	2918
RAMIREZ, Diosdado (Lakas)	624
REYES, Felix (Ind)	636

CENTRAL LUZON

BATAAN

Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
GARCIA, Enrique Jr. (Kampi)	964
ROMAN, Leonardo (NPC)	390

Vice Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BUNAG, Jaime (Ind)	9
ROMAN, Serafin (Kampi)	709
SANTIAGO, Liberato (NPC)	419

Congressman (2nd district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
GARCIA, Albert Raymond (Kampi)	823
GONZALES, Ma. Aurora (PDSP)	

BALANGA CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BANZON, Melanio Jr. (NPC)	408
GARCIA, Jose Enrique III (Lakas)	812

BULACAN

Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
ALMERA, Jaime (Ind)	792
Balite, Ernesto (Ind)	2308
Mendoza, Joselito (Kampi)	22868
Pagdanganan, Roberto (Lakas-CMD)	24139
Plamenco, Aurelio (PMP-UNO)	13439

Vice Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
ANIAG, Pacifico (Kampi)	20660
FERNANDO, Daniel (PMP/UNO)	12849
SY-ALVARADO, Wilhelmino (Lakas)	27312

Congressman (1st district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
Degala, Jesus Ricardo III (UNO)	4226
Opie, Felix (Kampi)	8706
Sy-Alvarado, Ma. Victoria (Lakas)	10064
Wenceslao, Delfin Jr. (LP)	6754

Congressman (2nd district) (Namfrel-PPCRV as of 6 am)	
Cruz, Ambrosio Jr. (Kampi)	19405
Pancho, Pedro (Lakas)	13277
Salvador, Crisanta (Ind.)	
Villafuerte, Jaime (PMP)	

Congressman (3rd district) (Namfrel-PPCRV as of 6 am)	
Domingo, Ricardo (Ind)	
Silverio, Lorna (Lakas)	1242
Valdecantos, Renato (PMP)	732

Congressman (4th district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
De Silva, Rudolph Bryan (PMP-UNO)	1702
Nicolas, Reylina (Lakas)	6768
Pleyto, Salvador (Kampi)	4947

CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE

Congressman (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BARTOLOME, Felipe (Lakas)	9644
GALANG, Danilo (Ind)	225
MAGBITANG, Eduardo (Ind)	26
MARTIR, Germogenes Jr. (Ind)	338
ROBES, Arturo (Kampi)	8890

CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
ROQUERO, Eduardo (Kampi)	9478
SARMIENTO, Angelito (Lakas)	10280

CITY OF MALOLOS

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
CRUZ, Amanda (Ind)	7330
DE GUZMAN, Clemente (Ind)	2328
DOMINGO, Danilo (Kampi)	16822

NUEVA ECIJA

Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
JOSON, Mariano Cristino (Kampi)	11109
UMALI, Aurelio (Lakas)	19949

Vice Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
JOSON, Edward Thomas	13801
TARUC, Jose (Lakas)	16343

Congressman (2nd district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
FELIMON, Jose (Kampi)	1384
FLORA, Nemesio (Ind)	37
GARCIA, Simeon (PMP)	2067
VIOLAGO, Joseph Gilbert (Lakas)	3859

Congressman (3rd district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
CHUA, Voltaire (Kampi)	2453
FAJARDO, Pacifico (LP)	1335
JOSON, Eduardo IV (UNO)	1361
UMALI, Czarina (Lakas)	3956

Congressman (4th district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
ANTONINO, Rodolfo (Kampi)	1589
PADIERNOS, Gay (Lakas)	4177
VILLAREAL, Julita (UNO)	1912

CABANATUAN CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
JOSON, Tomas III (Kampi)	3496
MENDOZA, Raul (PDP-Laban)	1034
VALINO, Elpidio (Ind)	63
VERGARA, Alvin (Lakas)	4853

GAPAN CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
NATIVIDAD, Ernesto (Kampi)	5117
NATIVIDAD, Juanita (Ind)	140
PASCUAL, Rodrigo (LP)	2476
VELAYO, Arthur (Ind)	590

SAN JOSE CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BELENA, Marivic (Lakas)	5000
SALVADOR, Veronica (Kampi)	2256

PAMPANGA

Governor (Namfrel as of 4:16 PM, 756 precincts)	
GUILLERMO, Edna (Ind)	159
LAPID, Mark (Lakas)	35183
MANIAGO, Arnold (Ind)	57
PAMATONG, Elly (Ind)	133
PANLILIO, Eddie (Ind)	44060
PINEDA, Lilia (Kampi)	37781

Vice Governor (Namfrel as of 4:16 PM, 756 precincts)	
GUIAO, Joseller (Kampi)	52503
LAUS, Paul Ristan (Lakas)	37781

Congressman (1st district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BACANI, Luisito (Ind)	59
LAZATIN, Carmelo (Lakas)	4405
NEPOMUCENO, Gerald (NPC)	4085

Congressman (2nd district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
ARROYO, Juan Miguel (Lakas)	4902
MONTEMAYOR, Jose Jr. (LP)	685

Congressman (3rd district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
GONZALES, Aurelio Jr. (Kampi)	9189
LABUNG, Ferdinand (PDSP)	7308
LAGMAN, Eligio (NPC)	4891
SANTOS, Amado (Ind)	299

Congressman (4th district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BONDOC, Anna York (NP)	20324
ESTACIO, Rene (NPC)	1397
SONZA, Jose (Ind)	8341
TARUC, Reynaldo (PMP)	18

ANGELES CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
ABAD SANTOS, Eleanor (PMP/UNO)	227
ALFONSO, Edgar (LDP)	246
LAZATIN, Carmelo III (Kampi)	3253
NEPOMUCENO, Francis (NPC)	6085

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
AQUINO, Reynaldo (Kampi)	5989
RODRIGUEZ, Oscar (Lakas)	6548

TARLAC

Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
CALMA, Ernesto (Ind)	636
COJUANGCO, Jose Jr. (Kampi)	4889
YAP, Victor (NPC)	4598
ESPINA, Ernesto (PMP)	147

Vice Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
AGANON, Marcelino Jr. (NPC)	5281
ROY, Rey (Kampi)	2520

Congressman (2nd district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	4463
TABAMO, Guillermina (Kampi)	4010
YAP, Jose (Lakas)	

TARLAC CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
MANALANG, Gelacio (PMP/UNO)	3736
MENDOZA, Genaro (Lakas)	3103
RIGOR, Sherwin (Kampi/NPC)	2977

ZAMBALES

Governor (PPCRV as of 11:15 a.m.)	
MAGSAYSAY, Jesus Vicente (Lakas)	1826
DELOSO, Amor (LP)	3863
TORRES, Ruben (Kampi)	441
PASCUA, Teofilo (Ind)	3

Vice Governor	
ABASTA, Sancho (Lakas)	1085
DOMRANG, Maming (NPC)	6
MAGSALIN, Buenaventura (PMP)	1841
GORDON, Anne Marie (LP)	2919

Congressman (1st district) PPCRV as of 8:45 a.m.	
MAGSAYSAY, Maria Milagros (Lakas)	4220
LACBAIN, Ramon III (LP)	3604

Congressman (2nd district) PPCRV as of 11:15 a.m.	
DIAZ, Antonio (Lakas)	4252
COLLADO, Renato (LP)	905
MENDARUS, Edwin (PDSP)	465

OLONGAPO CITY (AMA Quick Count as of 5pm)

Mayor	
BUNDANG, Don (Kampi)	41
GORDON, James Jr. (Lakas)	5968
PAULINO, Rolen (NPC)	4438

CALABARZON

BATANGAS

Governor (Namfrel as of 3 30 p.m.)	
SANTOS-RECTO, Rosa Vilma (Lakas)	32928
SANARES, Nestor (PMP)	1066
SANCHEZ, Armando (Kampi)	19963
MANDANAS, Marcos Sr. (Ind)	536

Vice Governor	
BUSTAMANTE, Praxedes (Ind)	64
DE LEON, Christopher (UNO)	3944
ERMITA, Edwin (Lakas)	9419
LEVISTE, Jose Antonio II (Kampi)	7250
MAGSOMBOL, Fortunata (KBL)	168

Congressman (2nd district)	
GUTIERREZ, Luis (Ind)	58
CABIGAO, Orestas (Lakas)	10126
MANDANAS, Hermilando (LP)	33774
MENDOZA, Edgar (Kampi)	6241

Congressman (4th district)	
SABILI, Meynardo (Ind)	1833
MENDOZA, Mark Llandro (NPC)	1830
RECTO, Richard (UNO)	380

BATANGAS CITY

Mayor	
DIMACUHA, Eduardo (Kampi)	35730
CHAVEZ, Ruel (Lakas)	19979

Vice Mayor	
ALDOVER, Glenn (Kampi)	25426
AMBIDA, Ricardo (Lakas)	26779

LIPA CITY (Namfrel as of 3 a.m.)

Mayor	
AFRICA, Eric (Kampi)	5614
GOZOS, Oscar (Lakas)	17951
PANGANIBAN, Mario (PMP)	2755

LAGUNA

Governor (Comelec as of 3 p.m.)	
LAZARO, Teresita (Lakas)	151449
OLIVAREZ, Edwin (UNO)	128209

Vice Governor	
HERNANDEZ, Ramil (UNO)	92904
SISON, Raul Marco (Lakas)	62717

Congressman (3rd district) PPCRV/Namfrel as of 1:19 p.m.	
ALAVA, Adoracion (Kampi)	2348
AMANTE, Damaso (Ind)	1294
AQUINO, Florante (Lakas)	12809
ARAGO, Maria Evita (LP)	14265
ATIENZA, Andrew (Ind)	276
GAPANGADA, Arcadio Najie (NPC)	11732
VELASCO, Enrico (Kampi)	1492

SAN PABLO CITY

Mayor	
AMANTE, Vicente (NPC/LDP/Aksyon Demokratiko)	29496
BUESER, Danton (LP)	16334
COSICO, Alfredo (Ind)	480

MIMAROPA

ORIENTAL MINDORO

Governor (Namfrel as of 10:30 a.m.)	
PANALIGAN, Arnan (Lakas)	17846
MARASIGAN, Murphy (PMP)	9064

Congressman (1st district)	
VALENCIA, Rodolfo (Lakas)	8688
LEVISTE, Renato (NPC)	7117
DELOS REYES, Pol Alzona (Ind)	150

Congressman (2nd district) Namfrel as of 3 p.m.	
SALCEDO, Margaux Marie (PMP)	6891
UMALI, Alfonso (LP)	17259

CALAPAN CITY (Namfrel as of 10:30 a.m.)

REPIZO, Gilbert (KAMPI)	404
RAMIREZ, Gil (LDP)	1184
LEACHON, Paulino (Liberal)	1830
PARAS, Roberto (LAKAS-CMD)	1816

PALAWAN

Governor (Namfrel as of 4 p.m.)	
REYES, Mario Joel (Lakas)	7240
ACOSTA, Andrie (Ind)	175
KATON, Edmundo (Ind)	17

Vice Governor	
PONCE DE LEON, David (NPC)	7031

Congressman (2nd district)	
MITRA, Abraham Kahlil (NPC)	6214
LOPEZ, Richard (Ind)	20
MORALES, Christopher (Ind)	20
LAGASCA, Raymundo Jr. (LP)	1700

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY

Mayor	
HAGEDORN, Edward (Kampi)	5523
MATILLANO, Eduardo (Kampi)	2706

BICOL

ALBAY

Governor (PPCRV as of 2:30 p.m.)	
BICHARA, Stephen(Ind)	482
GONZALEZ, Fernando (Lakas)	5714
QUIAPON, Abdel Noel	3
SALCEDA, Jose Ma. Clemente (Ind)	5975

Congressman (1st district)	
BOLO, Jose (Ind)	29
CALISIN, Jesus (UNO)	9175
LAGMAN, Castelar (Lakas)	16876

Congressman (2nd district)	
APIN, Amelia Bonita (UNO)	3128
BICHARA, Al Francis (NP)	4671
IMPERIAL, Carlos (Lakas)	4475
MERCADER, Noel (Ind)	14

LEGAZPI CITY (PPCRV as of 2:30 p.m.)

Mayor	
IMPERIAL, Michael Victor (NPC)	4341
ROSAL, Noel (Lakas)	5123
VALENCIA, Reynaldo (Ind)	25

DARAGA	
JAUCIAN, Gerry	1703
MACASINAG, Onorfe	7
TRIUMFANTE, Cicero	1802

TABACO CITY (PPCRV as of 2:27 p.m.)

Mayor	
LAGMAN-LUISTRO, Cielo Krisel (Lakas)	14942
ROCHA, Oscar (UNO)	11510

SORSOGON

Governor (Namfrel as of 1 p.m.)	
ESCUDERO, Antonio (UNO)	623
HAMOR, Edwin (NP)	2106
LEE, Inocencio Jr. (Ind)	6
LEE, Sally (Lakas)	3049

Congressman (1st district)	
BALMACEDA, Cesar (Ind)	1220
BAÑARES, Jerry (Kampi)	76
DINEROS, Daniel (Ind)	6
DURAN, Jose Vicente (Lakas)	1416
ESCUDERO, Salvador III (UNO)	2830
OCAMPO, Isagani (Ind)	66

SORSOGON CITY (Namfrel as of 1 p.m.)

Mayor	
AQUINO, Rebecca (LP)	229
CHUA, Roman (Ind)	263
DELGADO, Rosalio Jr. (Ind)	148
DIONEDA, Leovic (UNO/NP)	3148
RODRIGUEZA, Robert (Lakas)	2334

WESTERN VISAYAS

AKLAN

Governor (AMA, as of 5 p.m.)	
GALVAN, Kareen	59
GARCIA, Ma. Bettina	1,056
MARQUEZ, Carlito	3,630
RAMOS, Victoria	3,073

Vice Governor	
CALIZO, Gabrielle	4,832
TOLENTINO, Ronquillo	3,478

Congressman	
MIRAFLORES, Florencio	4,695
ACEVEDO, Anthony	2.540

ANTIQUE

Governor (PPCRV-NAMFREL as of 3 p.m., 135 of 1,327 precincts)	
PACIFICADOR, Arturo (KBL)	5,042
PEREZ, Salvacion (NPC)	6,447
PLAMERAS, Jovito Jr. (Lakas)	5,843

Vice Governor	
CADIAO, Rhodora J. (Lakas-CMD)	11,144
FORNIER, Francisco X. (Independent)	393
TE, Mary Jean N. (NPC)	6,524

Congressman (lone)	
DELFIN, Robert (PDSP)	8,108
JAVIER, Exequiel (Lakas)	10,314
MALLARES, Narzal (PMP)	585
VILLAFLOR, Antero (Ind)	82

CAPIZ

Governor (AMA, as of 5 p.m.)	
TANCO, Vic (LP)	11,922
AMOROSO, Zenon (Ind)	71

Vice Governor (AMA, as of 5 p.m.)	
BARREDO, Felipe	13,259

Congressman (first district) (AMA, as of 5 p.m.)	
CELINO, Angel Alan (Kampi)	2,124
DEL ROSARIO, Antonio (LP)	2,578

ROXAS CITY (Comelec, as of 4 p.m.)

Mayor	
ALMALBIS, Teresa (Kampi)	406
BERMEJO, Vicente (LP)	965

Vice Mayor (Comelec, as of 4 p.m.)	
DADIVAS, Ronnie T. (Liberal Party)	973
ARROJADO, Joseph	412

GUIMARAS

Governor (NAMFREL, as of 4 p.m., 118 precincts)	
MIAQUE, Bernie (Kampi)	6,607
NAVA, Felipe (Kampi)	14,625

Vice-Governor	
JABASA, Edgardo A. (Lakas-CMD)	7,095
TIONADO, Aurelio G. (Kampi)	10,545

Congressman	
ESPINOSA, Edgar (Lakas)	23,889
NAVA, Joaquin Carlos Rahman (NPC/Kampi)	30,174

ILOILO

ILOILO CITY (NAMFREL as of 3 p.m., 177 out of 1,144 precincts)

Congressman	
GONZALES, Raul Jr. (Lakas)	10,369
MALABOR, Mansueto (PDP-Laban)	5,501
GENGOS, Vicente (LP)	5,181

Mayor	
TREÑAS, Jerry (Lakas)	18,078
ALIM, Joshua (PDP-Laban)	315
GAJE, Juanito	50

Vice-Mayor	
MABILOG, Jed Patrick E. (Lakas-CMD)	18,836
PORRAS, Winstone T. (PDP-Laban)	1 178

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

BACOLOD CITY

Congressman (COMELEC as of 5 p.m., 88 of 7,219 precincts)	
DESTACAMENTO, Dante (Ind)	305
HAGAD, Andres (Ind)	8,543
NOVERO, Renecito (NPC)	42,481
PARRENO, Phillen (Ind)	2,124
PUENTEVELLA, Monico (Lakas)	30,612
TEMPLADO, Marcos (Ind)	256

Mayor	
BERDIN, Jovito (Ind)	476
CALAGUING, Alberto (Ind)	177
DOJILLO, Joel (Ind)	1,115
LEONARDIA, Evelio (NPC)	54,761
PONTERAS, Vicente (LP)	3,473
VALDEZ, Luzviminda (Lakas)	21,242
VERDEFLOR, Oscar (Ind)	1,894

Vice Mayor	
CAÑA, Lyndon (Independent)	27,402
SAYSON, Jude Thaddeus (NPC)	33,751
SY, Elmer (Lakas CMD)	16,223
TINGSON, Abraham (Independent)	344

CENTRAL VISAYAS

BOHOL

Governor (NAMFREL, as of 12 p.m.)	
AUMENTADO, Erico (Lakas)	52,482
CERICOS, Roberto (PDP-Laban)	1,779
DALAY, Renato (Ind)	971
DUMALUAN, Teofanes (Ind)	256
MAGAT, Mario Jr. (Ind)	1,017
PELIGRINO, Peter (Ind)	60

Vice Governor	
HERRERA, Julius Caesar	42,391
TIROL, Godofreda	13,694

Congressman (1st district)	
CHATTO, Edgardo (NPC)	31,090
DELA SERNA, Victor (PDP-Laban)	5,552

Congressman (2nd district)	
CAJES, Roberto (Lakas)	2,133
GARCIA, Wenceslao (PDP-Laban)	90

Congressman (3rd district)	
JALA, Adam Relson (Lakas)	6,832
RELAMPAGOS, Rene (LDP)	6,835
BALITE, Dionisio (Kampi)	3,551
INTE, Victoriano (Ind)	10
LIM, Alexander (Aksyon Demokratiko)	1,646

TAGBILARAN CITY

Mayor	
LIM, Dan (NPC)	14,950
TORRALBA, Jose (Lakas)	11,266

CEBU

Governor (AMA as of 5 p.m.)	
GARCIA, Gwendolyn (Kampi)	21,082
LEJARDE, Rolando (Ind)	87
OSMEÑA, Mary Joyce (Ind)	286
YAPHA, Antonio Jr. (PDSP)	8,344

Vice Governor (AMA, as of 5 p.m.)	
MARTINEZ, Clavel	11,110
SANCHEZ, Gregorio	18,860

Congressman (1st district) (NAMFREL, as of 2: 20 p.m., 3 out of 1,739 precincts)	
ADLAWAN, Ricardo (Ind)	3
CONCEPCION, Felipe (Ind)	3
GULLAS, Eduardo (Kampi)	279
RAMA, Enrique (UNO)	45

Congressman (6th district) (AMA, as of 5 p.m.)	
SOON-RUIZ, Nerissa (Kampi)	13,700
QUISUMBING, Gabriel Luis (Lakas)	13,398
DELA SERNA, Vicente (Ind)	3,802

CEBU CITY (NAMFREL, as of 2:20 p.m.)

Congressman (1st District) (432 of 1,183 precincts)	
DEL MAR, Raul (Lakas-BOPK)	41,791
VILLARIN, Florencio (GO)	2,424
ARENASA, Juan (Ind)	377

Congressman (2nd District) (334 of 1,830 precincts - 18.25%)	
CUENCO, Antonio (Lakas-BOPK)	13,950
GUARDO, Jonathan (GO)	11,206

Mayor (766 of 3,013 precincts)	
OSMEÑA, Tomas (BOPK)	47,222
DELOS SANTOS, Mary Ann (GO)	27,721

Vice-Mayor (766 of 3,013 precincts)	
ABANGAN, Crititulo F. (Independent)	229
GARCIA, Raymond Alvin N. (Uno-Kusog)	19,361
RAMA, Michael L. (BOPK-Lakas-CMD)	53,568

NEGROS ORIENTAL

GOVERNOR (NAMFREL, as of 2.26 p.m., 158 precincts)	
MARCIAS, Emilio II C.	16,768
TORRES, Samuel B.	686

VICE GOVERNOR	
BALDADO, Jose A.	16,192

CONGRESSMAN (2nd DISTRICT)	
ANIÑON, Raul Silorio	230
ARNAIZ, George P.	16,008
MONTAÑO, Ramon E.	2,055

DUMAGUETE CITY

Mayor	
GUARIN, Ardelio (Ind)	217
UMBAC, Arturo (UNO)	8,427
PERDICES, Agustin	8,558

Vice Mayor	
ERAMES, Arturo J. (Independent)	1,482
MAQUILING, Woodrow S. Sr. (Liberal)	9,699
ABLONG, William E. (Lakas-Kasaligan)	8,546

EASTERN VISAYAS

EASTERN SAMAR

Governor (AMA, as of 5 p.m.)	
CARMENFORTE, Camilo (UNO-GO)	154
EVARDONE, Ben (Lakas)	162

Vice Governor	
ANASABIAS, Rudulfo	2
GELI, Leander	247
RAMIREZ JR, Ricardo	9

Congressman (lone)	
COQUILLA, Teodulo (PMP-UNO)	251
DOCENA, Agustin (UNO-GO)	2
LIBANAN, Elda (Lakas)	88

LEYTE

Governor (AMA, as of 5 p.m.)	
PETILLA, Carlos Jericho (Lakas)	7,402
YAOKASIN, Jimmy (UNO)	582

Vice Governor	
BAGULAYA, Ma. Mimietta	6,792
DUMAS, Lino Esteban	529

Congressman (1st district)	
CLEMENCIO, Feliciano (PMP)	348
MESIAS, Danilo (UNO)	129
ROMUALDEZ, Ferdinand Martin (Kampi)	8,967

Congressman (4th district)	
CODILLA, Eufrocino Jr. (Kampi)	577
CODILLA, Eufrocino Sr. (Lakas)	14,604
LOCSIN, Carmelo (NPC)	10,505
TAGOLINO, Silverio (Ind)	95

SOUTHERN LEYTE

Governor (NAMFREL)	
LERIAS, Marisa (NPC)	8,074
MERCADO, Damian (Lakas)	9,386

Vice Governor (NAMFREL)	
MAAMO, Miguel II (Lakas-CMD)	7,945
TUMOL, Eva (NPC)	7,849

Congressman (lone) (NAMFREL)	
CASTAÑARES, Roberto (LP)	8,796
MERCADO, Roger (Lakas)	9,270

MAASIN CITY (NAMFREL)

Mayor	
LERIAS, Rosette (NPC)	3,327
SAMACO, Maloney (Lakas)	3,027

Vice Mayor	
ABIERA, Marie Effie (Lakas-CMD)	2,501
BASCUG, Arturo (NPC)	1,740

WESTERN SAMAR

Governor (COMELEC, 17 precincts)	
FIGUEROA, Nelptha (Lakas)	533
TAN, Milagrosa (Kampi)	1,277

Vice-Governor (COMELEC, 17 precincts)	
REDAJA, Jesus (Kampi)	1,093
TIOPES, Menandro (Lakas-CMD)	510

Congressman (2nd district) (COMELEC, 17 precincts)	
FIGUEROA, Catalino (PDP-Laban)	620
TAN, Sharee Ann (Kampi)	1,256

CATBALOGAN

Mayor	
ARCALES, Fe	64
UY, Coefredo	1,618

CALBAYOG (NAMFREL, complete - 66 precincts)

Mayor	
SARMIENTO, Mel Senen (LP-Lakas)	5,169
TUAZON, Rudolfo (Kampi-NP)	3,450

Vice-Mayor	
AQUINO, Ronaldo (LP)	4,883
ROSALES, Ariel (Kampi)	3,467

ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA

ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR

Governor (Comelec as of 3:30pm)	
CERILLES, Aurora (Kampi)	898
POLOYAPOY, Tirsendo (PMP)	150

Congressman (1st district)	
REAL, Isidro Jr. (Lakas)	397
YU, Victor (Ind)	675

ZAMBOANGA CITY (Namfrel as of 3:50pm)

Congressman (1st District)	
GONZALES, Edigario (Lakas)	10,186
CLIMACO, Maria Isabelle (LDP)	17,095

Congressman (2nd District) (AMA Quick Count as of 5pm)	
DELOS REYES, Susan (Ind)	4,200
ENESANDO, Samuel (Ind)	728
FABIAN, Erico (LDP)	12,588

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5pm)	
CAJUCOM, Cleofe (Ind)	737
DELA CRUZ, Crisanto (Lakas/Kampi)	19,495
LOBREGAT, Celso (Lakas)	24,555
SAKILIN, Sonny (Ind)	176

PAGADIAN CITY (as of 3:30pm, Comelec)

Mayor	
CO, Samuel (Kampi)	791
URRO, Alejandro (Lakas)	328

NORTHERN MINDANAO

MISAMIS ORIENTAL

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY

Congressman (1st District) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BACAL, Henry	131
CANOY, Reuben	138
DABA, Annie	525
MONTESSA, Camalo (NPC)	274
SORIANO, Antonio	601
SPIERS, Michelle	944
UY, Rolando	2,303

Congressman (2nd District) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BENALDO, Jose Benjamin	3,578
CABANLAS, Edgar	368
JARDIN, Samuel Aloysius	651
RODRIGUEZ, Rufus	3,551
ROJAS, Francisco Sr.	275

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
BORRES, Felix Jr. (Ind)	408
CALINGIN, Antonio (NPC)	1,097
CANOY, Rhona (Ind)	216
JARAULA, Constantino (Lakas)	6,001
MAGTAJAS, Pablo (PDP-Laban/UNO)	3,554

DAVAO

DAVAO DEL NORTE

Governor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
DEL ROSARIO, Rodolfo (Lakas)	11,546
GEMENTIZA, Gelacio (UNO)	3,848
GAVIOLA, Jess (Ind)	2,138

Congressman (1st district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
ALVAREZ, Pantaleon (NPC)	9,163
OLAÑO, Arrel (Lakas)	12,842

TAGUM CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
LEMOS, Meliton	5,627
UY, Rey	16,470

DAVAO DEL SUR

DAVAO CITY (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)

Congressman (1st District)	
MABILOG, Edgar (Ind)	817
MILLENDEZ, Anacleto (Ind)	776
NOGRALES, Prospero (Lakas)	11,701

Congressman (2nd District) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
APORTADERA, Abelardo Jr. (LP)	923
BATUCAN, Joel (Ind)	123
DUREZA, Jimmy (PDSP)	1,220
GARCIA, Vincent (NPC)	1,117

Congressman (3rd district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
DE GUZMAN, Benjamin (LDP)	995
LOPEZ, Rene Elias (NPC)	143
RODRIGUEZ, Sonja (Kampi)	83
UNGAB, Isidro (PDP Laban)	231

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
DUTERTE, Rodrigo (PDP-Laban)	25,549
JOAQUIN, Justinian (Ind)	293
MANTILLA, Teodoro (Ind)	268
SATERA, Henry (Ind)	303
SULAMIN, Rodrigo (Ind)	247

DAVAO ORIENTAL

Governor (PPCRV as of 3:30pm)	
MALANYAON, Corazon (Kampi)	4,970
PALMA GIL, Maria Elena (Lakas)	3,150

Congressman (2nd district)	
ALMARIO, Thelma (Lakas)	4,168
RABAT, Carlo Luis (LDP)	3,559

MATI (PPCRV as of 3:30pm)

Mayor	
RABAT, Michelle	2,783
LOPEZ, Rosalind	986

SOCCSKSARGEN

SOUTH COTABATO

Governor (Comelec as of 3.30 pm)	
FUENTES, Daisy (NPC)	16,962

Congressman (1st district) (Namfrel as of 3:30 pm)	
ANTONINO-CUSTODIO, Darlene (NPC)	20,818
PACQUIAO, Emmanuel	11,227

Congressman (2nd district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
PINGOY, Arthur (NPC)	9,099
DE PEDRO III, Hilario	9,742

GENERAL SANTOS CITY

Mayor (Namfrel as of 3:30 pm)	
ACHARON, Pedro	21,480
NUÑEZ, Rosalita	7,757

KORONADAL CITY

Mayor (Namfrel)	
MIGUEL, Fernando	11,754
LEDDA, Jose Jr.	7,582

CARAGA

AGUSAN DEL NORTE

Governor (Comelec as of 11:00am)	
AMANTE, Eripe John (Kampi)	10,247
PLAZA, Valentina (Lakas)	7,526

Vice Governor (Comelec as of 11:00am)	
CORVERA, Enrico (Kampi)	8,222
LIBARIOS, Arcedel (Lakas)	6,812

Congressman (1st district) (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
AQUINO, Jose II (Lakas)	14,520
CALO, Angelo (Ind)	5,317
JIMENEZ, Angelo (Kampi)	13,287
PLAZA, Charito (UNO)	7,569
VILLACASTIN, Felix (Ind)	204

Congressman (2nd district) (Comelec as of 11 am)	
AMANTE, Edelmiro (Kampi)	9,895
LOMONSOD, Jorge (Ind)	28
PLAZA, Democrito Alberto III (Lakas)	6,153

BUTUAN CITY (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)

Mayor	
EMBOY, Teodoro (Ind)	535
MATBA, Ma. Angelica (Kampi)	18,288
PASCUAL, Sergio (UNO)	2,014
PLAZA, Democrito II (Lakas)	21.280

SURIGAO DEL NORTE

Governor (Comelec as of 11:00am)	
BARBERS, Robert Ace (Lakas)	11,211
NAPULI, Felimon (Partido Padajon Surigao)	3,802
ORQUINA, Danilo (Kampi)	4,627
VILLAR, Sirnante (Ind)	3

Vice Governor	
CATRE, Noel (Lakas)	7,222
CONGRESO, Lauris (Partido Padajon Surigao)	569
ECLEO, Alan (NPC)	4,198
NAVARRO, Rodolfo (Kampi)	2,556

Congressman (1st district)	
MATUGAS, Francisco (Kampi)	1,927
NAVARRO, Wenelisa (Ind)	804
RAVELO, Marino (UNO)	18
TARUC, Dominador (Ind)	321

Congressman (2nd district)	
ANDANAR, Wencelito (Kampi)	873
BARBERS, Robert Lyndon (Lakas)	7,405
LAGO, Pepito (UNO)	24
PRESTON, Michael (Ind)	5
RAFOLS, Roldan (Ind)	12
ROMARATE, Guillermo Jr. (Partido Padajon Surigao)	9,247

SURIGAO CITY

Mayor (AMA Quick Count as of 5 pm)	
CASURRA, Alfonso (Ind)	3,269
MATUGAS, Ernesto (Partido Padajon Surigao)	3,553

SURIGAO DEL SUR

Governor (Namfrel as of 12.30pm)	
PIMENTEL, Vicente Jr. (Lakas)	13,141
SALGADO, Elpidio (PMP)	167

Vice Governor	
NAVARRO, Librado (Lakas)	11,290

Congressman (1st district)	
AZARCON, Antonio (PDP-Laban)	2,259
MURILLO, Gregorio (Ind)	5,003
PICHAY, Philip (Lakas)	7,577

Compiled by Inquirer Mindanao Bureau: Jeoffrey Maitem, Franklin Caliguid, Alvin Anonuevo, Ramil Banguis, JB Deveza, Dennis Jay Santos, Ferdinand Zuasola, Julie Alipala, Joselle Badilla, Nico Alconaba; Inquirer Northern Luzon; Inquirer Southern Luzon Bureau: Delfin Mallari Jr., Marlon Luistro, Jun Virola, Romulo Ponte, Robert Bagalay, Ephraim Aguilar, Madonna Virola, Ezren Dometita, Ma. Chielu Abarquez, Jason Opeña, Annielyn Baleza; Inquirer Visayas Bureau: Nestor Burgos Jr., Hazel Villa, Ma. Diosa Labiste, Carla Gomez, Romy Amarado, Jhunnex Napallacan, Bernadette Parco, Felipe Celino, Cyrain Cabuenas, Grace Pecaoco, Marvi Benedicto, Farrah Tura, Alexandra Jaca; Inquirer Research: Cyril Bonabente, Lawrence De Guzman, Chona Galang, Kate Pedroso, Maricar Tolosa, Eddon Sarmiento, Symon Trinos

TU hangs in balance as Davao alliance snaps

DAVAO CITY—LAST-MINUTE junking on the eve of the elections finally broke the fragile alliance between the Team Unity ticket led by reelectionist Rep. Prospero Nograles (first district) and the Hugpong sa Tawong Lungsod of Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, leaving the promised 12-0 TU senatorial win in Davao hanging in the balance.

Emerging from the voting center in Matina Aplaya here, where he cast his vote on Monday afternoon, Duterte crumpled a campaign leaflet and told reporters that it was over for him and Nograles.

"It's now in the still waters," Duterte said.

Unlike his enthusiasm for the TU before the elections, Duterte kept his silence when asked whether he would deliver the 12-0 vote demanded by the administration.

Duterte remains the charismatic political leader of this city and is always thought to command votes for whoever he supports.

His being unopposed in the mayoral race is one big proof that nobody was ready as yet to challenge that perception.

"We've never been allies in the first place," said Duterte, referring to Nograles.

He said he only coalesced with Nograles for the midterm elections because of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"There was never an alliance from the beginning. A unity ticket, yes, but that was only because of President Arroyo," he said.

Duterte said he was hurt that Nograles junked some of the Hugpong candidates just to campaign for his son, Karlo, the second nominee of the Kalahi party-list group.

Kalahi is a political group for overseas contract workers believed to be backed by the administration.

Some political analysts view the young Nograles' party-list group as a means to develop a clout, a broader mass base and machinery in preparation for the next elections.

Karlo had been eyeing the post of the vice mayor before the election season started but decided to back out when Duterte picked his daughter as running-mate.

Nograles, who once lost to Duterte, has always wanted to become mayor.

He was the only politician identified as Duterte's fiercest political rival until the fragile alliance was forged between them under Ms Arroyo's TU ticket. *Germelina Lacorte, Inquirer Mindanao*

DUTERTE
DUTERTE

THE DUTERTES campaigning in Davao City for a father-daughter tandem. INQUIRER PHOTO

182 foes of bet clog jail in town gripped by fear

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

'It just goes to show you can't win over Voldemort ...'

BACOLOD CITY—A MUNICIPAL TRIAL court judge has ordered the arrest of nearly 200 supporters of a mayoral candidate in Pulupandan, Negros Occidental, for holding a rally and allegedly threatening his opponent in late April.

But the decision of the 182 supporters of Samson Mondia to surrender en masse yesterday only caused a headache to the municipal police: the jail could not keep them.

The facility, which only has two cells measuring 10 feet by six feet, is empty. It could accommodate a total of only 25 prisoners, according to Mayor Luis Mondia, the brother of Samson.

The mayor said the police had asked for his help since they did not have enough money to feed the 182 people who gave up at about 11 a.m.

Mondia said the allies of mayoral candidate Magdaleno Peña had filed a complaint of grave threats against his brother's supporters.

Attack

On April 29, 26 of Peña's supporters took over the house of Councilor Hedy Gonzales, who ran under Samson's ticket, prompting a crowd of Mondia sympathizers to gather outside the house.

Gunfire was heard and the police jailed the 26 Peña supporters inside the Gonzales house. They were later released.

On May 10, warrants of arrests were issued by Judge Manuel Limsiaco of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court of Valladolid, San Enrique and Pulupandan against the 182 supporters of Mondia for grave threats based on a complaint filed by Peña supporter Boy Betia.

Betia alleged that the 182 were present during the April 29 incident although many of them said they were not even there. Samson posted P1.1 million in bail for all the respondents.

However, on May 11, Limsiaco issued two more warrants of arrest against each of the 186 based on the complaints of two other allies of Peña.

The 186 avoided arrest until Election Day as Samson Mondia no longer had the money to post the P12,000 bail needed for each of them. Yesterday, they finally gave themselves up.

The other version

Peña claimed the Mondia supporters attacked all of his 26 supporters who were inside the Gonzales house. Because of this, he said, his supporters could seek warrants of arrest against the 182.

Samson said his opponent, Magdaleno Peña, was winning in the Pulupandan poll count.

He said he was not winning even in his bailiwicks in the town proper, as fear got the better of voters who were allegedly facing threats of eviction and arrests from Peña.

The mayor conceded that Peña would win over his brother as the election returns were showing yesterday.

Voldemort

On the other hand, Peña said he would win by more than 1,000 votes.

"It just goes to show you can't win over Voldemort," Peña said, referring to himself as the dark lord in the Harry Potter series.

The mayor said the issuance of arrest warrants against the leaders of his brother affected Samson's campaign since they spent the crucial days before the elections in hiding and were unable to campaign for him.

Peña has been seeking the eviction of 3,000 squatters from his family's land in Pulupandan. He has obtained court orders for the eviction of many of them.

Lawrence Surendra, a member of the International Observers Mission which monitored the elections in Pulupandan, said "a definite climate of fear" prevailed in the town.

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2 killed, 11 hurt in Cebu ship blast

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—TWO PERSONS were killed and 11 were injured in an explosion on an interisland ship off the port of Cebu at 7:45 last night.

The M/V Butuan Bay owned by Carlos A. Gothong Lines Inc. was bound for Ozamiz City with 513 passengers and crew when the explosion occurred in the engine room after it left Pier 7 in Mandaue City, the Cebu Coast Guard said.

Two bodies were found near the engine room by Coast Guard personnel, a Coast Guard source told the INQUIRER.

Commodore Alejandro Flora, Coast Guard Central-Eastern Visayas commander, said the explosion did not appear to be terror-related.

Flora said Ben Gothong, one of the shipping company's owners, told him five passengers and six crewmen were injured.

He said the passengers suffered burns when the explosion blew debris through the ship's smokestack and this fell on them.

One of the injured passengers, Boy Surigao, said in a radio interview he was looking at the fading lights of Cebu when he heard a loud explosion.

He said he saw several cots fly before the ship was plunged into darkness and passengers went into a panic.

Surigao, whose wife Nimfa was also injured, said rescuers on a Coast Guard tugboat arrived minutes later.

The injured passengers were brought to the Cebu City Medical Center. They had superficial burns and were in stable condition, said Perelyn Rodil, nurse on duty in the CCMC emergency room.

The injured crewmen were brought to another hospital in Cebu City. Their condition was not known at press time.

KARMIC PAUSE: Garci loses the election big-time but tells PDI in his house in Baungon, Bukidnon, that he's not "craving" the position, after all. He returns to farming. MYLES CANTAL ALBASIN/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Garci: The trouble ...

From page A1

President Macapagal-Arroyo, yesterday conceded defeat in the race to represent Bukidnon's first congressional district although the tabulation of votes had yet to be completed.

The initial vote count showed Garcillano, an independent candidate, trailing his two opponents, Maria Lourdes Acosta and Candido Pancrudo.

"The first impact was [Monday] night. As I was monitoring the count, I saw my chances of winning melt like ice cream, and I knew the trend showed that I was losing," he said.

But as of yesterday, the partial unofficial quick count of the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) in Baungon showed Garcillano in the lead with 3,406 votes, followed by Acosta, 1,724, and Pancrudo, 1,391.

"Well, I was always confident here in Baungon. But this is a small town," he said.

Baungon has more than 15,000 registered voters.

In an interview weeks ago, Garcillano expressed high hopes for victory. He said he was feeling the overwhelming support of his town mates, friends and allies during the campaign.

He also said certain people had convinced him to run, and that he went around and received optimistic views on his chances.

'A dirty game'

Garcillano, a lawyer, gained notoriety in 2005 when CDs emerged containing purported phone calls between him and Ms Arroyo discussing how to ensure her a million-vote margin over the late opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. in the 2004 presidential election.

The "Hello Garci" tapes forced Ms Arroyo to issue a public apology and a denial of wrongdoing. Garcillano himself also denied he had done anything wrong, but refused to answer allegations in detail.

Now Garcillano sees politics in a different light.

"People in politics, with few exceptions, are very unreasonable and hard to satisfy. Politics is indeed a dirty game," he said, adding:

"I will let [politicians] do their thing, I am done. There is no chance for me to prove my worth in this country."

Friends and allies said the refusal by Garcillano to buy votes had contributed to his apparent loss.

"We told him to give out money to ensure his winning but Sir Garcillano said he could not accept that. He believes that voters don't need money to elect smart, credible and honest candidates," said Ekit Maglangit, 47.

"No one can dictate to him what to do. He told us that he would go into fair play because he still believed that people would vote for him even without the money," Maglangit said.

Dolly Vergara also said Garcillano did not win because he did not buy votes.

"He should have done what the other candidates have done. He could have won," Vergara told the INQUIRER.

Changing the landscape

Garcillano accused Acosta (sister of three-term Rep. and now gubernatorial candidate Nereus Acosta, both running under the opposition wing of the Liberal Party) and Pancrudo (who is being backed by incumbent Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri) as well as the Genuine Opposition senatorial slate of using him and the "Hello Garci" scandal in their respective campaigns.

He said his purpose in seeking an elective post was to change the "political landscape."

"It is so sad that the next generation will greatly suffer as the political landscape of the country worsens," he added.

Asked if he would try again in a future election, Garcillano said: "Elections are another closed chapter in my life. I will move on."

He will move around the country as well: "I will go back to Tawi-Tawi maybe and enjoy the all-white sand and pristine beaches there. I missed that, and I missed the days when I was assigned there."

While Garcillano is experiencing a drought in votes, he waits for rain to come so he can start planting corn in his 12-hectare farm in Baungon.

"The land is ready. I am so excited to do what I have been used to—farming. I grew up in a farm, and it is what I want to do now," he said.

Garcillano said he did not want to plant rice anymore because he had gotten tired of walking in the mud at the family farm in Pangasinan.

"What I want to do now is walk around the farm with my shoes on," he said.

Black prop

Garcillano told ABS-CBN yesterday morning that he would respect the results of the polls in his own bailiwick, and that he was blaming "black propaganda" for his defeat.

"Well, as early as 10 [Monday] night, I was sure that I would lose. I'm sad about this black propaganda that Zubiri and the other party have been saying against me. I would not crave for this position. I just thought of at least facing my accuser in a fair and square discussion of these things," he said.

Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez, an opposition stalwart who grilled Garcillano during the House inquiry into the "Hello Garci" tapes, said the latter had "learned some lessons in his defeat which would serve him well in whatever he's going to move into."

"He's not that old and has a very productive life ahead. The Garci scandal and his defeat in the elections are things that would provide him a lot of lessons," Golez said.

Deserves to lose

But TXTPower, the activist group that popularized the "Hello Garci" ring tone to protest the 2004 presidential election, expressed elation over Garcillano's apparent defeat.

"This is a just political punishment, handed down by people from his very town, for Garci's criminal involvement in the 2004 election. He shamed the people of Bukidnon and caused a lingering national scandal. He deserves to lose and to be rejected by his own people," TXTPower president Anthony Ian Cruz said in a statement.

Cruz also said Garcillano's loss was "a precursor to the expected defeat of Ms Arroyo's coalition partners, especially in the Senate race." *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac in Manila*

Darlene 'knocks out' Pacquiao

From page A1

Educator Bro. Manny de Leon said the emerging poll results would indicate that popularity alone would not spell victory in an election.

He said that Custodio was no match to Pacquiao in popularity but she compensated for that weakness by using her solid machinery.

"The political machinery of the Antoninos is still strong. They had a well-organized campaign down to the purok level and they sustained it up to the finish line," De Leon said.

Yearning for change

De Leon wished that the people had more choices aside from Pacquiao and Custodio.

"I am inclined to believe that people want nothing but real change. But we have no choice. The people are wise enough to vote for (one) who is more competent," he said.

According to De Leon, another drawback of Pacquiao's political bid was the perception that he was a yes-man of Malacañang.

De Leon's view was supported by Fr. Angel Buenavides, spokesperson of the Diocese of Marbel.

PACQUIAO: Anti-GMA sentiment did him in.

CUSTODIO: Political machinery worked all the way.

Widespread discontent

According to Buenavides, the anti-GMA sentiment is very strong in the South Cotabato, Sarangani and General Santos City (Socsargen) area.

Based on the latest Namfrel tallies, the top five senatorial choices of voters in the region come from the opposition.

"I guess the result of the voting suggests widespread dissatisfaction among the people. Anybody who opposes the President would gain the people's support," Buenavides said.

Irony

The biggest irony perceived by Buenavides in the just ended elections was that the candidates of the Genuine Opposition (GO) did not even come here as a team to campaign.

But GO had the backing of the AIM party.

The members of Team Unity (TU), on the other hand, were endorsed by Pacquiao.

Aside from having vast resources, the Antoninos banked on their well-entrenched political machinery.

Custodio's father, former Congressman Adelbert Antonino, entered politics in 1984 when he ran for the Batasang Pambansa. He lost. But in 1987, he won in the first congressional elections under the Aquino administration. Both Adel and his wife, Luwalhati, also won in the 1992 synchronized elections when they ran for mayor and representative, respectively.

Trillanes scores coup in Senate Magic 12

From page A1

the National Movement for Free Elections, but reminded his supporters not to let their guard down.

Mahar Mangahas, president of the survey firm Social Weather Stations, believes it is the perception of Trillanes being persecuted rather than his access to the media in the last days of the campaign that has worked so far in his favor.

"My gut feel says that it depends on what the media say about [Trillanes]. He made that 10-point jump [from mid-April to early May] without personally being able to campaign," Mangahas said yesterday in a phone interview.

"It's the overall message of being persecuted. Even if he is stopped from meeting the media, if the overall message is that he's being persecuted, people will gravitate to him," Mangahas said.

"The initial partial results by Namfrel and the media quick counts are flattering," the detained former Navy lieutenant and Genuine Opposition (GO) senatorial candidate said in a statement he released through his camp.

"Results from Visayas and Mindanao where historically cheating is executed by those in power have yet to be counted and made public," he said. "I now call on the poll watchers and election officers to continue to safeguard the votes of the people. And let the true will of the people be heard."

Trillanes, one of the leaders of the failed Oakwood mutiny in 2003, has made an unexpectedly strong showing in the senatorial contest and continues to stay in the top 10 of the "Magic 12."

Dark horse

Trillanes' surge in the early counts did not come as a surprise to GO campaign manager Sen. Sergio "Serge" Osmeña III.

"He's a dark horse in the elections," Osmeña said.

He said it would be cause for regret if Trillanes lost because the latter had been steadily improving in the surveys leading to Monday's elections.

"He was gaining about 10 percent every week. I would be sorry if he does not make it," Osmeña went on, adding that he wanted young, idealist and principled men and women like Trillanes to join the Senate.

While most of the Senate candidates, including the front-runners, preferred to keep their campaigns on a "positive" theme, Trillanes was among the handful who went on an all-out antiadministration tack.

"For the rest, it was a beauty-contest type of campaign," said Osmeña.

Panfilo Lacson, also of GO, said Trillanes' good showing was indicative of a strong anti-Arroyo vote.

"In the weeks toward the elections, Trillanes had already been written off. Now, he is ranking high although it is still early in the counting process," said the reelectionist senator.

Lacson himself is performing well in the quick counts. As of 1:33 p.m. yesterday, he was at a strong third place with more than 870,000 votes.

"If there is one that can represent the anti-Arroyo vote, it is Trillanes," Lacson said.

10-point jump

In an article that explained the SWS' last preference survey conducted on May 2-4, Mangahas took note of Trillanes' earlier 10-percentage-point jump: "The gain of Trillanes by 10 points between mid-April and early May, moving him from 21st to tied-15th in the process, is very noteworthy since it shows that it is not impossible to make up a large deficit within a short period of time."

Mangahas yesterday told the INQUIRER it was unlikely that Trillanes made a second 10-point surge after the May 2-4 survey in time for the May 14 elections.

But he said such a development remained probable.

"Getting one more 10-point jump has not been done before in the last three elections. But who knows? There's always a first time," he said.

If Trillanes got that boost less than two weeks after the May 2-4 SWS survey, he is expected to be where he was yesterday—in the lower fringes of the quick counts' top 12.

Too early

As of 1:33 p.m. yesterday, the AMA quick count had Trillanes at No. 9 with more than 641,000 votes, leading independent candidate and fellow accused rebel Gregorio Honasan by some 6,000.

Gabriel Claudio, President Macapagal-Arroyo's political adviser, said it was too early to comment on Trillanes' showing.

Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, information chief of the Armed forces of the Philippines, also said as much.

"I'd like to answer that when we have the official results," Claudio said when asked to comment.

He added that the number of votes counted by the media networks was still "very small" and based mostly in Metro Manila.

Claudio expressed doubt that Trillanes would ultimately make the cut. "It does not conform with the surveys," he said.

But another Palace functionary, who declined to be named because she is not the political spokesperson, expressed dismay at the early results favoring the rebel soldier.

"It's alarming. Why would people vote for him even though he broke the law? I think our electorate needs to be educated," said the official. "We have such an unusual kind of electorate—they vote for actors, or someone who is behind bars."

The official said voters might have "romanticized" the man and voted for him: "Maybe the voters think he is eye-catching. He has a good physique, and he can speak well."

But the official pointed out that Trillanes would still be in jail even if he wins.

Battle not over

Trillanes thanked the volunteers and supporters who had helped him in the campaign he conducted from his detention cell at Fort Bonifacio, where he awaits the resolution of the mutiny and coup d'etat cases filed against him.

He reminded them that "the battle is not yet over," and asked them to be vigilant in protecting his votes.

In an interview with defense reporters on May 4, Trillanes said he expected to win "regardless and despite of the cheating," as purportedly shown by surveys commissioned by his camp.

"We have our own surveys, and [the results are] very much different from what they have," he said in reference to other surveys being commissioned by various groups, including Malacañang.

At one point in the interview, he said reporters would be "surprised by the true picture" shown by the surveys commissioned by his camp.

Said the military's Bacarro: "When the time comes that the 12 who made it to the Senate are made known, we can say that this is what the people wanted."

Bacarro also reiterated to reporters that the military case against Trillanes would continue even if the latter won a Senate seat.

"The case will push through until such time that there is a resolution," Bacarro said.

Mutiny spokesperson

Trillanes caught the nation's attention on July 27, 2003, when he acted as spokesperson of the "Magdalo" junior officers who staged a mutiny at the former Oakwood Ayala Premier Hotel in Makati City.

He and the nearly 100 junior officers who led the mutiny railed against corruption in the military and called for the resignation of top security officials.

The officers have since been detained in various military camps; their men were eventually released after serving time for about two years.

Last December, Trillanes decided to run for the Senate on behalf of the Magdalo group, supposedly to test public acceptance of their cause.

In his certificate of candidacy, he listed his official nickname as "Magdalo."

He wrote a thesis on corruption when he took up a master's degree at the University of the Philippines College of Public Administration.

Cheating on each other

Osmeña said Trillanes appeared to gain from the supposed preoccupation of the administration's Team Unity candidates to make it to the Top 12.

"They'll be cheating on each other. Trillanes could slip past them. He's rising so fast that [the administration] did not even bother to cheat him," Osmeña said.

He said Trillanes could only rely on private election watchdog groups like the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting to "protect" his votes.

With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

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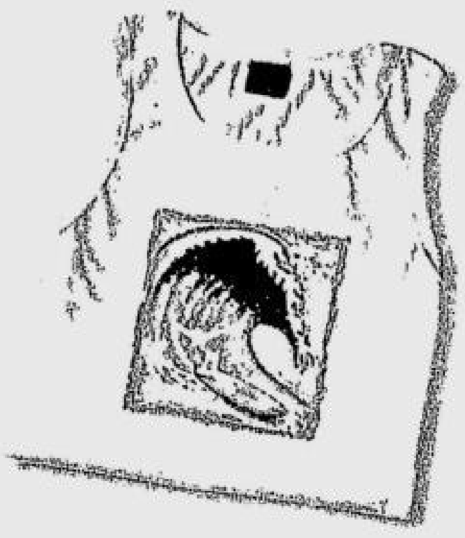

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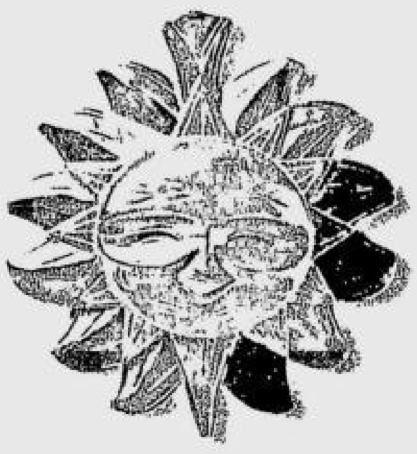

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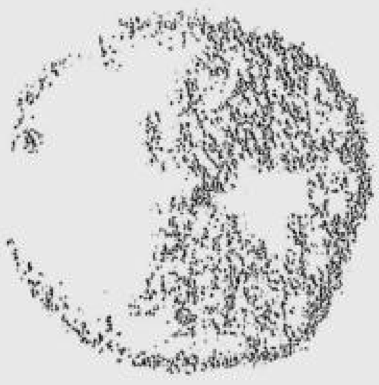

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Summer will soon be gone; rains due in 2 weeks

By TJ Burgonio

NOTICED THE SCORCHING HEAT TURNING into cloudy skies toward noon and becoming rain showers in the afternoon?

Well, summer is waning and within two weeks, it will yield to the rainy season.

"Summer is on the downturn, especially with the expected occurrence of rain showers and thunderstorms in the afternoon," said Nathaniel Cruz, weather branch chief of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

The temperature remained high this month, just slightly lower than the hottest temperature recorded in April, but the warm weather has been eased by cloudy skies and rain showers in the afternoons, he said.

Cooling down

Tuesday's temperature in Quezon City, for instance, was 34.8 degrees Centigrade, which was still relatively high. This month's warm weather and humidity lasted only up to a certain time of the day, unlike in April when it was warm and humid throughout the day, according to Cruz.

"The temperature remains high, but it doesn't last as long as it did like last month," he said.

Pagasa officials clarified that the episodes of nearly daily rain showers in some parts of Metro Manila last week were associated with the cold front, and were not a sign of an early onset of the rainy season.

In its weather outlook for the month, the bureau said that warmer than normal average air temperature would be felt in most parts of the country.

It also said that near normal rainfall was expected in most parts, except for Guimaras, Iloilo and Negros that were forecast to experience above normal rainfall. Below normal rainfall was likely in Ilocos Sur, La Union, Cagayan, Nueva Viscaya, Bicol's northern part, and some parts of eastern Visayas.

"We're on our way to the rainy season," Cruz said.

At least 13 cyclones

Pagasa said the country should expect at least one typhoon to hit the country before the end of the month. It also forecast that at least 13 cyclones will enter the country from May to September.

"A typhoon in May is not unusual. If there's no typhoon this month, that's not unusual, too," Cruz said.

Based on historical records, the shifting of the winds from the easterlies (winds from the east) to southwesterlies during the second half of the May signals the start of the southwest monsoon in this country. Associated with this shift is the onset of rains from late May to early June, according to Pagasa.

Global observations and forecasts predicted the potential development of the rains-associated La Niña during the next three months. But it would take a few more months more before "a clear trend becomes evident," according to Pagasa.

"So far there's no La Niña yet. But even without La Niña, we will still experience heavy rains that will cause flooding," Cruz said.

Even if this phenomenon develops in the next three months, its effects on the country's climate would not be felt "until the latter part of the year," he said.

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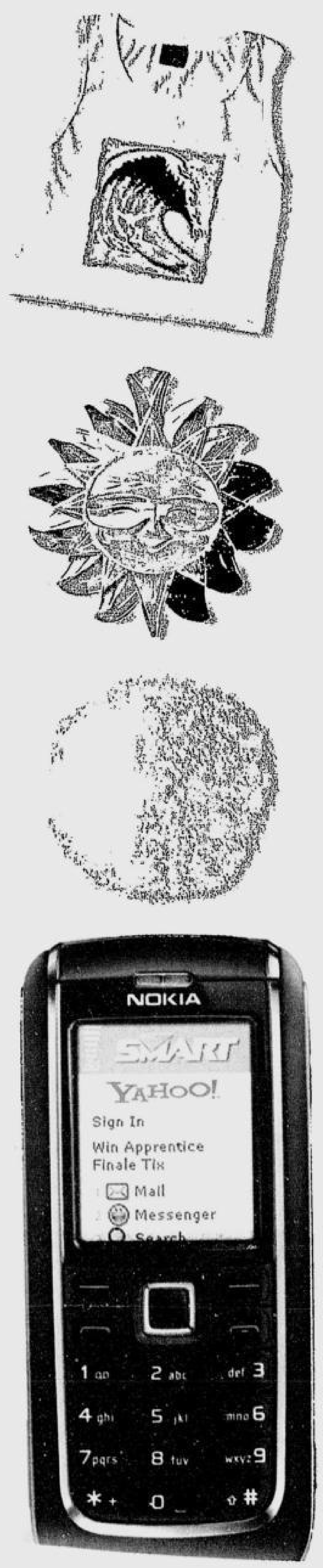

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Atienza campaign HQ searched by Lim

No fake ERs found, but Manila mayoral bet defends action

By Allison W. Lopez

THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE camps of Sen. Alfredo Lim and Ali Atienza, who are both contesting the mayoral post in Manila, further heated up when Lim conducted a search of Atienza's campaign headquarters in Malate, Manila at 2:30 a.m. yesterday.

Lim's counsel, Dante Acorda, said the former Manila police chief went to the area to verify receiving reports that fake election returns (ERs) were being switched for the real ones inside the Manileño Spa beside the Ninoy Aquino Stadium on Adriatico Street.

Asghar Datumanong, an Atienza supporter who was inside the spa, accused Lim, whom he said was accompanied by seven men, of forcing their way into the establishment by kicking the door open.

"*Pumasok sila, galit na galit, walang paalam* (They came in, very angry and without permission)," Datumanong said.

According to him, Lim's group searched the establishment's first and second floors for "fake election returns," causing panic among some 20 women, all Atienza followers, who were inside the building.

The search did yield election returns, although an examination conducted by Commission on Elections office Jovencio Balanquit—who also rushed to the scene—showed that these were legitimate copies given to the dominant majority political party, Lakas CMD.

Atienza was adopted by Lakas to be its official candidate for Manila mayor.

Datumanong said Lim and his men also found a laptop bag containing around P100,000 in cash which the former said were for their election expenses.

Atienza later held a press conference in which he assailed the "Gestapo-like raid" conducted on his campaign headquarters.

He said his lawyers were considering legal action.

"We have to protect our people. *Hindi dapat gumamit ng dahas* (Force should not be used)," Atienza said, adding that three women and children were "hurt" in the incident, while some ERs and around P50,000 in cash were missing.

He also clarified that he was entitled to the ERs since he was a Lakas candidate and that there was no reason for the Lim camp to suspect that there was cheating going on inside his campaign headquarters.

Lim, however, defended his actions, saying he acted on valid re-

ATIENZA/ A24

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Standard DOHC V6 Power and Available Four-Wheel-Drive Traction
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The Grand Vitara also offers a sophisticated available Four-Mode full-time four-wheel-drive system with two-speed transfer case. On the road, drivers have the security of full-time four-wheel drive, and when traveling off-road, drivers can use an interior-mounted switch to engage the center differential lock. If the going is really slow, the driver can select the Low (4L Lock) mode for low-speed power and traction.

Advanced Structural Engineering and Chassis Design
All Grand Vitara models feature a new, lightweight yet rigid unibody construction enhanced with a built-in ladder frame to offer the best of both worlds – a refined on-road ride and the rugged off-road performance expected from Suzuki SUVs. The structure is teamed with four-wheel independent suspension – MacPherson struts in front and a multi-link design in the rear – to provide precise handling both on-road and off-road. The Grand Vitara also features large, vented front disc brakes and rear drum brakes and power-assisted rack-and-pinion steering.

Uncompromised Safety Features
Every Grand Vitara model is fitted with active safety features, including ABS with electronic brake-force distribution (EBD) and Electronic Stability Program (ESP)1, including traction control. The ESP uses a variety of electronic sensors to measure vehicle speed, steering wheel angle and yaw. This information is sent to a central controller that can intervene as needed. Under certain conditions, such as when unintended oversteer or understeer is detected, the system can apply individual brakes and reduce engine torque to help the driver maintain the proper cornering line. Together with the traction control system, the ESP helps ensure vehicle stability and optimum cornering, handling in take off or acceleration, emergency maneuvers, or driving on slippery road surfaces.

The Grand Vitara also features six airbags as standard equipment – driver and front passenger seat-mounted side-impact airbags supplemental restraint system (SRS), advanced dual-stage front airbag SRS, advanced weight-sensing front passenger airbag SRS and front and rear side-curtain airbags.

The three-point driver and front passenger seat belts feature shoulder height adjustment. In the rear seat, each passenger is provided with a three-point seat belt system and a headrest. The rear child-seat LATCH system (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children), along with rear-door child safety locks, are designed to help protect young rear-seat passengers. The innovative stamped steel unibody with built-in ladder frame provides comprehensive protection, with features such as a reinforced cabin with the added safety of a head-impact protection padding and front and rear side-impact door beams designed to help maintain the integrity of the passenger compartment.

In the event of a collision with a pedestrian, the hood is designed to absorb some of the impact and help protect against serious head injuries. The front end and the bumper use energy-absorbing materials to help reduce the possibility of serious leg injuries.

Sleek Sophistication Meets Versatile Functionality
The Grand Vitara offers ample interior space for driver and passenger comfort and 24.4 cubic feet of storage space with the seats up or 68.9 cubic feet of storage space when the convenient 60/40 split seatbacks are folded forward. With its carefully engineered control layout and close attention to materials and fit-and-finish, the interior of the Suzuki Grand Vitara is functional and attractive. The list of standard features includes air conditioning with automatic climate control and micron air-filtration system, cruise control, digital clock with outside temperature, fuel consumption indicator and adjustable center armrest with internal storage. The Grand Vitara also features a standard AM/FM/CD/MP3 -capable audio system, and steering-wheel-mounted audio controls, and an available six-disc in-dash CD changer with six speakers, including two tweeters and a subwoofer.

For more information, visit www.suzuki.com.ph.

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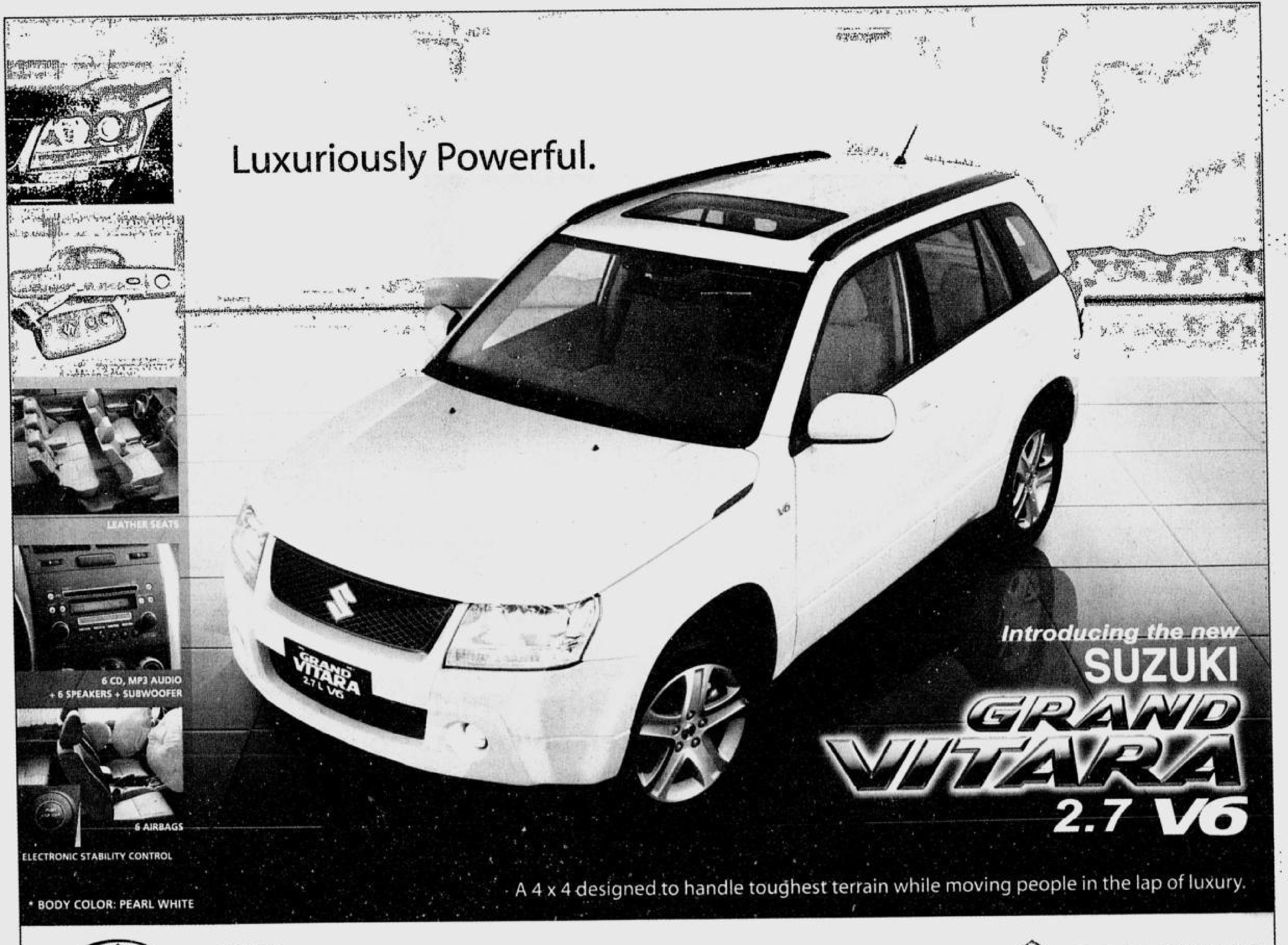
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INQGRAPH: LOUIE BACANI

ELEKSYON 2007

*Partial and official Comelec and Namfrel counts compiled by Metro Staff * as of 6:30 p.m., Tuesday*

NCR

LAS PINAS CITY

Congressman (lone)	
BUENAFLOR, Nestor (Kampi/Ind)	12
VILLAR, Cynthia (NP)	1837
ALUMBRES, Florentino (Kampi)	26
Mayor	
ABELLAR, Antonio Jr. (Kampi)	16
AGUILAR, Vergel (Ind)	1895
ROQUE, Benjamin (Ind)	3
TATLONGHARI, Jefferson (Ind)	7
Vice-Mayor	
DELA CRUZ, Berlin (NPC)	658
GONZALES, Benjamin (PMP)	39
IDANAN, Chito (Kampi)	12
MARTINEZ, Ferdinand (Kampi)	7
MEDINA, Henry (Lakas)	1115

MAKATI CITY

Congressman (1st district)	
IBAY, Oscar (Kampi)	462
LOCSIN, Tedoro Jr. (PDP-Laban)	2020
Congressman (2nd district)	
BINAY, Mar-len Abigail (UNO/PDP-Laban)	1834
GENUINO, Erwin (Lakas)	1268
Mayor	
BINAY, Jejomar (PDP-Laban/UNO)	5068
DULALIA, Elias (Ind)	19
LAPID, Manuel (Lakas)	658
Vice-Mayor	
MERCADO, Ernesto (PDP-Laban)	3943
YABUT, Nemesio Jr. (Lakas)	1636

MALABON-NAVOTAS

Congressman (lone)	
CINCO, Roberto (Ind)	30
FRANCISCO, Maritoni (PMP)	2450
LACSON-NOEL, Josephine Veronique (NPC)	4729
SANDOVAL, Alvin (LP)	4320

MALABON

Mayor	
ORETA, Canuto (Lakas)	8084
Vice-Mayor	
TORRES, Maricar (Lakas)	2440
VICENCIO, Arnold (PMP/NPC/UNO)	6218

NAVOTAS

Mayor	
TIANGCO, Tobias (Partido Navoteño)	2308
SANDOVAL, Ricky (Coalition of Administrative Political Party)	1001

MANDALUYONG CITY

Congressman (lone)	
CUSTODIO, Emelito (Ind)	730
GONZALES, Neptali II (Lakas)	14482
Mayor	
ABALOS, Benhur (Lakas)	14154
ALPUERTO, Camilo (LP-Jack V. Ramel)	278
SOLOMON, Florencio (Ind)	331
Vice-Mayor	
DE GUZMAN, Danilo (PMP)	7865
RAMEL, Jack (LP-Jack V. Ramel)	232
STA. MARIA, Renato (Lakas)	7775

MARIKINA CITY

Congressman (1st district)	
ANDAYA, Ruperto (UNO/PMP)	593
GARCIA, Alberto (Independente Partido Pilipino)	6
PAZ, Eva (Kampi)	1450
RIVERA, Benedicto Luis (Ind)	11
TEODORO, Marcelino (Lakas)	3212
Congressman (2nd district)	
CANDAZO, Romeo (PMP)	3201
DE GUZMAN, Del (Lakas)	4432
DELA LLANA, Arturo Pete (Ind)	26
Mayor	
FERNANDO, Ma. Lourdes (Lakas)	10011
MOLINA, Benjamin Jr. (PMP)	1690
Vice-Mayor	
ANDRES, Marion (Lakas)	9252
ANGELES, Efren (PMP)	2339

QUEZON CITY

Congressman (1st district)	
ABESAMIS, Rommel (NPC)	554
CRISOLOGO, Vincent (Lakas)	1770
PADILLA, Antonio (Kapatiran)	31
Congressman (2nd district)	
ABAN, *Vicente Jr. (Ind)*	7
BALOSA, Esmeraldo (Ind)	2
JIMENEZ, Walter (Ind)	2
LIBAN, Dante (LP)	551
MATHAY, Ismael III (Kampi)	1641
NUEVA, Norma (AK Party Independent)	9
SIMON, Brigido (PMP)	320
SUSANO, Mary Ann (Lakas)	1156
Congressman (3rd district)	
SORIANO, Lita (Ind)	15
CALDERON, Ramon (KBL)	43
CORRIOSO, Benjamin (LP)	10
DEFENSOR, Matias Jr. (Lakas)	1552
LOPE, Wendell (Independent Peoples Volunteer)	11
PUMAREN, Filomeno Jr. (Kapatiran)	235
REMOTO, Danton (Ind)	87
Congressman (4th district)	
DAZA, Nanette (Lakas)	1793
PALACIOS, Albert Hans (UNO/Ind)	312
Mayor	
ACEBEDO, Romeo (Ind)	74
ALVAREZ, Florian (Ind)	89
ROSALES, Andy (Ind)	83
BELMONTE, Feliciano Jr. (Lakas)	10927
Vice-Mayor	
BAUTISTA, Herbert (Lakas)	10875
BAUTISTA, Roberto (Ind)	129
JOTA, Rolando (KBL)	60
UBSUM, Rogelio (Ind)	35

PARANAQUE CITY

Congressman (1st district) (Namfrel)	
FERRER, Walfrido (PDP-Laban)	2409
VARONA, Netz (Ind)	112
YABUT, Fortunato (Ind)	77
ZIALCITA, Eduardo (Lakas)	6748
Congressman (2nd district)	
ARROYO, Benjamin (UNO/Ind)	70
GOLEZ, Roilo (Ind)	919
NERY, Jose Sr. (Ind)	28
ROSAL, Pacifico (Ind)	18
ROXAS, Romeo	486
Mayor	
BERNABE, Florencio (Lakas)	6919
OLIVAREZ, Pablo (PMP/UNO)	5348
Vice-Mayor	
YLLANA, Andres Jose Jr. (Lakas)	5380
TAMBUNTING, Gustavio (Aksyon Demokratiko)	6620

SAN JUAN

Congressman (lone)	
ALCOVENDAZ, Ericson (Ind)	1568
ANDRADA, Manuel (Lakas/Kampi)	197
ZAMORA, Ronaldo (PMP)	2342
Mayor	
BENALLA, Juan (Ind)	30
EJERCITO, JV (PMP)	3558
ENRIQUEZ, Alexander (Kampi)	68
SINGSON, Engracia (Ind)	266
Vice-Mayor	
ANGELES, Glenn (Ind)	1379
CELLES, Leonardo (PMP)	2342
SIBAL, Danilo (Kampi)	50
TAMAYO, Aniceto (Ind)	41

TAGUIG-PATEROS

Congressman (1st district)	
CAPCO, Jose Jr. (Ind)	796
CAYETANO, Ma. Laarni (NP)	1278
CERAFICA, Arnel (Kilusang Diwa ng Taguig)	1271

TAGUIG

Mayor	
MIRANDA, Marianito (NPC)	822
TINGA, Sigfrido (KDT)	2215
Vice-Mayor	
ELIAS, George (KDT)	1832
LABAO-ALZONA, Ma. Loida (UNO)	1141

PATEROS

Mayor	
CAPCO, Rosendo (Lakas)	334
MEDINA, Jaime (PDP-Laban)	737
Vice-Mayor	
ROSALES, Dominador Jr. (Lakas)	228
SANCHEZ, Jose Jonathan (PDP-Laban)	756

VALENZUELA CITY

Congressman (1st district)	
ESPIRITU, Danilo (Ind)	107
GATCHALIAN, Rexlon (NPC)	1162
LOZADA, Edilberto (Lakas)	1016
Mayor	
CARLOS, Jose Emmanuel (Lakas)	2304
GATCHALIAN, Sherwin (NPC)	2405
Vice-Mayor	
ESPIRITU, Antonio (NPC)	2275
MARTINEZ, Eric (Lakas)	2433

Inquirer Metro reporters: Kristine Alave, Jeanette Andrade, Julie Aurelio, Nancy Carvajal, Allison Lopez, Margaux Ortiz, DJ Yap with Inquirer Election 2007 volunteers: Shelley Dimaculangan, Jonette Marie Mañosa, Angela Rebueno, Mary Ann Fresco, Frances Mangosing, Katherine Liu, Penelope Endozo, Verity Cabigao, Faith Alayon, Hershey D. Homol, Jenny Lynne G. Aguilar, Patricia Jule T. Haban, Camille G. Fallorina, John Edison T. Fulgencio, Reuben P. Mercado, Jessica Hermosa, Christian Sanchez, 3. Joseph John Raymundo, Restituto Matikas Santos, Jacky Lynne Oiga

Mayoral bet Jaworski seeks new election in Pasig City

By Kristine L. Alave

PASIG MAYORAL CANDIDATE Robert "Dodot" Jaworski yesterday said he plans to file a petition asking the Commission on Elections to declare a failure of election in the city due to "massive cheating."

Jaworski made the statement after the canvassing of election returns in Pasig got off to a rocky start.

There were reported delays in the delivery of ballots to the canvassing area, power outages in several places and incidents of candidates' supporters being harassed.

There was also tension at city hall when about 700 residents—composed of supporters of Jaworski and his rival for the mayor's post, Councilor Robert "Bobby" Eusebio—showed up to monitor the tallying of votes after a van filled with election returns (ERs) was found in the area.

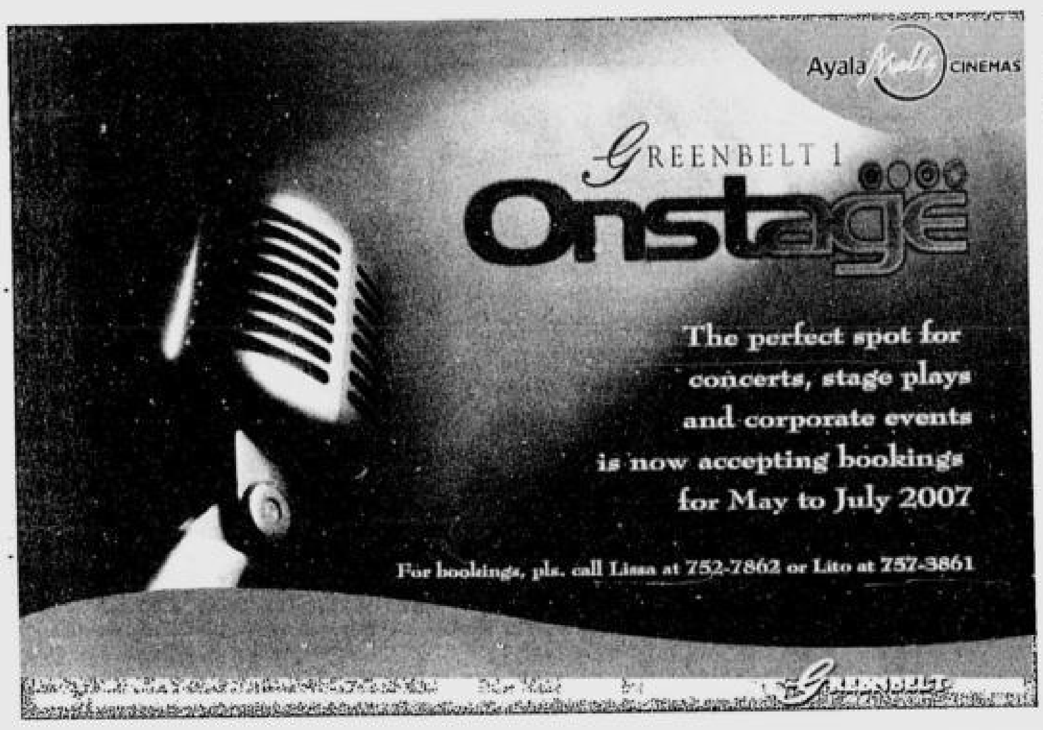
"I secured the van so that nobody could come near it. It had ERs inside," Eastern Police District operations chief, Supt. Cornelio Barrios, said.

The van was later sent to the Commission on Elections office in Manila.

The van's driver, identified as Wilson Olaso, told the police that he was only paid to drive the van to Pasig City by two unidentified women who told him that they were going to deliver documents to city hall.

After inspecting the van's contents, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said that the ERs found inside were authentic copies which belong to the watchers of the dominant Lakas-CMD party.

Jaworski's camp, however, said they would still urge the Comelec to schedule another election in the city.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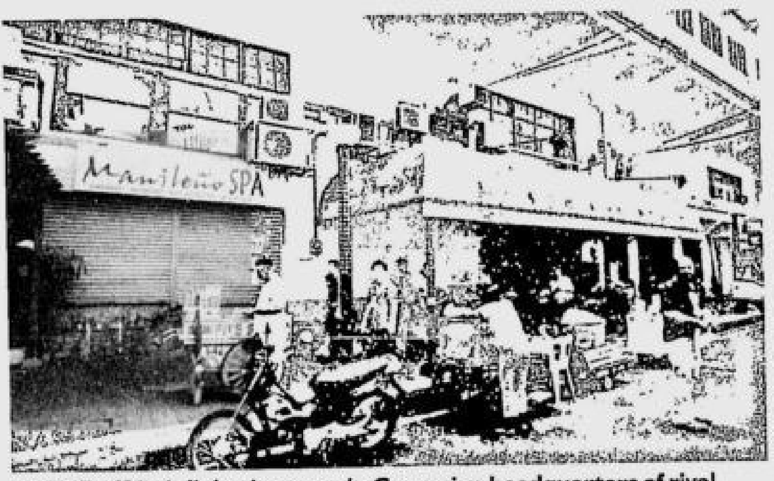
SCENE of Lim's lightning search: Campaign headquarters of rival Atienza on Adriatico Street.
REM ZAMORA

Atienza . . .

From page A23

ports from his men who allegedly saw teachers going in and out of the establishment. He claimed it was possible that the teachers carrying legitimate ERs swapped it for fake ones inside the office, were given money and later proceeded to the canvassing area to surrender the fake ERs.

"They told me there were three men carrying envelopes who forced their way inside the massage parlor, so I said let's follow them. The door was open. We didn't force our way in and Manila police chief, Supt. Danilo Abarzosa, saw all these," he said.

Lim said they never found the men, who, he believed, left through a connecting door that was already locked when they arrived. The 77-year-old senator denied that anyone was hurt, or items such as ERs and cash were missing. "Those are false reports," he said. "I will face whatever charge they will throw at me."

Meanwhile, another mayoral candidate, Rep. Rudy Bacani, yesterday conceded the race to Lim. In a statement, Bacani acknowledged that he was not doing well in the initial results of the tally. Lim also reported that another rival, Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna, also admitted defeat and congratulated him during a chance meeting at a hotel in Manila.

McDonald's gives free Burger McDo to ten polling stations

McDonald's Philippines is one with the Filipino people for clean, fair and honest elections. As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, McDonald's is committed to support the election officers and public school teachers as they selflessly accomplish their duties. The all-time favorite Burger McDo was given to these unsung patriots to help them do their important tasks.

Using the 24/7 Delivery Service, McDonald's products were delivered to ten identified Canvassing Areas in the cities of Caloocan, Las Piñas, Makati, Mandaluyong, Manila, Muntinlupa, Pasay, Pasig, Quezon and San Juan in Metro Manila.

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Pasay City canvassing fails to take off

By Julie M. Aurelio

CITING ALLEGED ELECTORAL FRAUD ON A massive scale, a lawyer for Pasay mayoral candidate Consuelo Dy yesterday asked the city's election officers to postpone the canvassing of election returns.

Winston Gines argued that the votes for two other mayoral candidates, which were supposedly disqualified by the Commission on Elections, should not have been credited in favor of another candidate, former Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad.

His objection subsequently delayed the start of the canvassing of election returns. As of press time, the proceedings have yet to start.

On Monday, a Comelec memorandum was distributed to polling precincts. It was signed by Alioden Dalaig, a lawyer of the poll body's law department. The memorandum, which allegedly did not have a Comelec seal, supposedly instructed poll officers to credit votes for Ramon Trinidad and Neil Trinidad in Wenceslao Trinidad's favor.

According to the memorandum, Wenceslao is still "the incumbent elected mayor of Pasay City," as the Court of Appeals has yet to decide on the Ombudsman's order for his dismissal from government service.

The Comelec memorandum, according to Gines, would mean that Trinidad would be getting additional votes. He added that they would move to exclude the supposedly "fraudulent election returns" from the canvassing.

Gines' motion, however, was met with opposition. Phil Ramos, counsel of congressional candidate Lito Roxas, said the election returns are still sealed and that there was no way to tell if the election returns were fraudulent. "Only losers don't want the canvassing to push through. They do not have any firm basis for their objection. How can that be? The election returns are still sealed," he pointed out.

Election officer Anthonette Soriano, meanwhile, rebuffed Gines' motion and decided to push through with the canvassing of ERs.

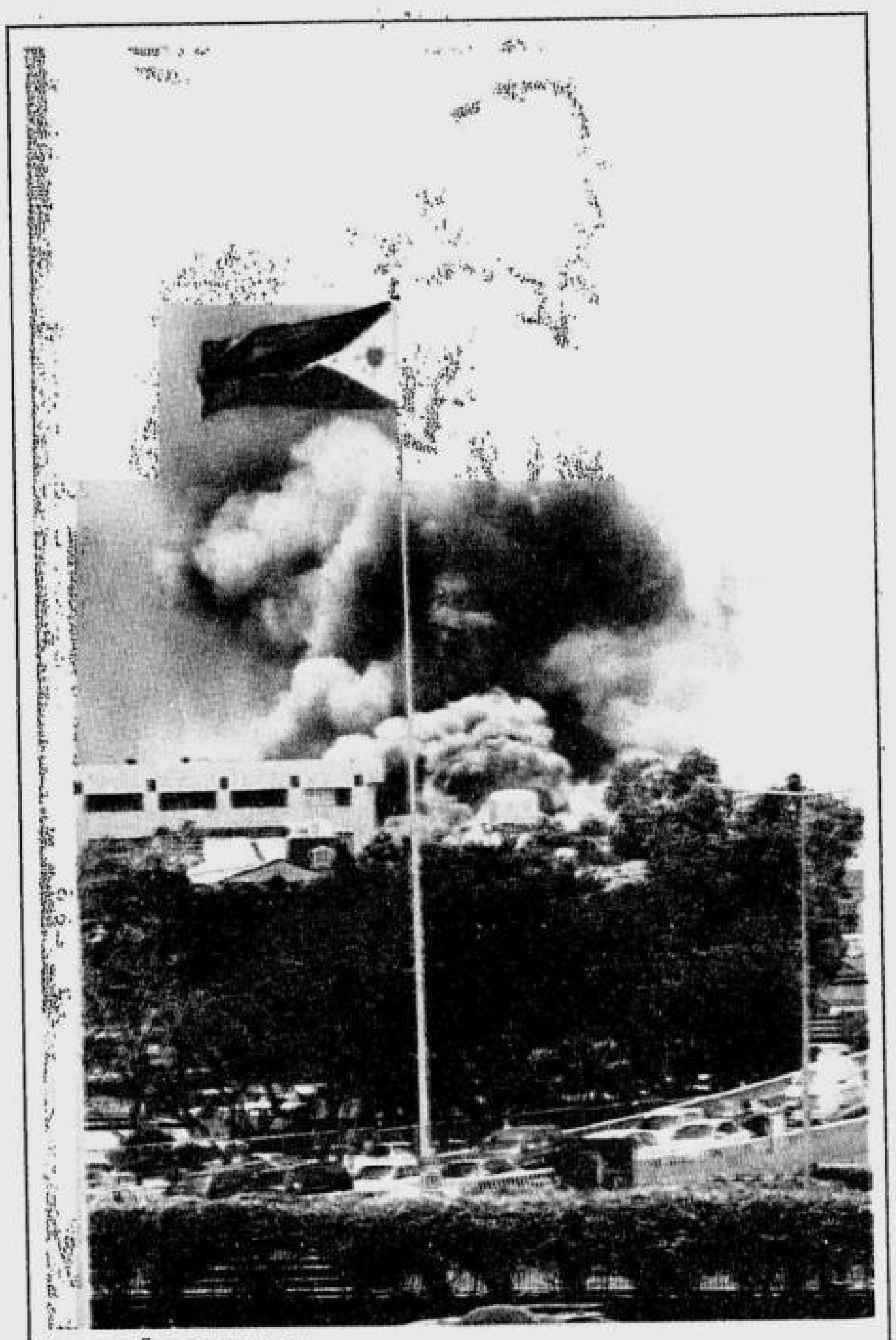
This prompted Gines to question each ER, once again delaying the proceedings. *With Hershey D. Homol*

DID YOU KNOW

MARIA Paz Mendoza Guanzon, one of the first female doctors in the country, was born on May 10, 1884 in Pandacan, Manila. She was also the founder of the National League of Filipino Women, and was the first woman member of the Board of Regents of the University of the Philippines.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Protesters vs Tiangco surround Navotas town hall



PARAÑAQUE FIRE
Smoke billows from a fire in Parañaque City yesterday that destroyed at least 120 shanties *(Story in MetroBriefs)*. JESS YUSON

By Nancy C. Carvajal

TENSION BROKE OUT IN THE NAVOTAS municipal hall yesterday as hundreds of supporters of Rep. Federico "Ricky" Sandoval and his brother, Alvin, gathered in front of the building to denounce what they claimed were incidents of election fraud allegedly perpetrated by Mayor Tobias "Toby" Tiangco last Monday.

Based on unofficial election results which came out on television and newspapers, Tiangco, who is running for reelection, was leading in the race against Ricky.

Alvin, on the other hand, is running for congressman, hoping to take over his brother Ricky's soon to be vacated post.

Tiangco was not in the municipal hall when supporters of the Sandoval brothers held the rally.

Bearing placards, the supporters also accused teachers who acted as election officers of favoring Tiangco.

The protesters put up several tents in front of a wooden stage, giving the impression that they were not about to leave anytime soon.

"We will stay here as long as we can, until we are heard," Lino Valdez, one of the group's leaders, told the INQUIRER.

Valdez said they have proof that cheating occurred in Monday's elections.

"We can show evidence that the cheating was done by Tiangco," he said.

Tiangco said he was leaving it to the police to control the crowd and ensure that no untoward incidents would happen.

He added that he had also asked police officials to make sure that there would be no repeat of the incident in 1998 when the municipal hall caught fire during the elections.

He also laughed off accusations that he cheated his rival.

"Why can't they (Sandoval supporters) accept the fact that the people of Navotas do not want them?" Tiangco told INQUIRER in a phone interview.

According to Supt. Eric Reyes, the city's police chief, they will not take any action against the protesters as long they do not hamper operations at the town hall.

"We will allow them to express their sentiments within the bounds of the law." Reyes said.

The police official added that law enforcers, being non-partisan, are not supposed to take sides, especially when they they enforce existing policies on the handling of protests.

Early proclamation of QC bets seen

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE WINNERS IN MONDAY'S ELECTIONS in Quezon City will be proclaimed before the end of the week, according to the local board of canvassers.

"We believe the proclamation of the winners will be made earlier this year compared to the 2004 elections because many of the local candidates are running virtually unopposed," City Prosecutor Claro Arellano, board vice chair, said yesterday.

For the same reason, he added, they only need to finish canvassing 50 percent of the city's 5,049 election returns before the winners can be declared.

Arellano said that based on their experience, the canvassing of election returns usually takes around four to five days.

"But now, it would probably take us only three to four days to accomplish everything and proclaim the winners," he predicted.

In the initial tallying of votes at the precinct level, incumbent Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. has racked up an insurmountable lead over his three opponents. His running mate, Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista, also enjoys a wide margin over his rivals.

Congressional candidates Nanette Daza of the city's fourth district and Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo of the first district also posted big leads over their opponents in the initial tallies.

Arellano said they began the canvassing of election returns at 9:30 a.m. yesterday. While the canvassing of election returns from the city's first, third and fourth districts began immediately, it took sometime for the board to start with election returns from the second district—the biggest area where more than half of Quezon City's 1,050,000 voters reside.

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Canvassing delayed in southern Metro

By John Edison Fulgencio, Reuben Mercado and Jenny Lynne Aguilar

THE CANVASSING OF ELECTION returns in Pateros town and the cities of Taguig and Muntinlupa was put on hold yesterday morning, postponing the counting of votes to late in the afternoon.

In Muntinlupa, the canvassing was moved to 5 p.m. because the pollworkers took until 11 a.m. to collect the election returns from the city's polling precincts.

But in Pateros, the proceedings were delayed until late afternoon after several women reportedly tampered with the ballot boxes containing the returns late Monday night.

Poll watcher Tess Paitan said three women allegedly working at the treasurer's office opened six ballot boxes Monday night without asking permission.

Paitan, with watcher Irona Bauy, followed the women to see where the boxes would be delivered.

"We stopped at the third floor where the boxes were picked up by a man and a woman and brought to the local elections office. We asked what was inside the box and they just said that it was the extra ballots that were not used yesterday," Bauy said.

Municipal Treasury officer in charge Amalia Santos, one of the women who was supposed to have opened the boxes, belied the charges.

"I don't know anything about it. All I did was post the numbers on the ballot boxes and read it to the poll watchers," she explained.

"They even signed as witnesses to the process. Then we wrapped chains around the ballot boxes. I even told the security men to guard the boxes," Santos added.

Election officer Melanie Lagerra of the Commission on Elections said the collection of election returns was not over until 7:30 a.m.

Back seat

Meanwhile, the canvassing of election returns in Taguig City also took a back seat as only 47 election returns from the city's 1,275 precincts were processed as of 10:45 a.m.

Board of Canvassing chair James Dell Demetria said they had not canvassed a single election return as of press time.

"We will just wait for the rest so the process is uninterrupted," he said.

Prime Pelayo, a coordinator of Task Force Poll Watch and chairperson of Gabriela Taguig, said the delay came about because some canvassers were denied entry to the canvassing area.

No IDs

"We have not been given our Comelec IDs yet. We were told that the special paper for printing the IDs had not arrived yet," Pelayo said.

"I put in a request for my ID on May 7 and I have gone back seven times since. But all our opponents have been given theirs," said Roger Antonio, a canvasser for the Nationalist People's Coalition.

Comelec acting election officer Enriqueta Danieles, however, said her office had more important matters to attend to in preparation for the elections than preparing the canvassers' IDs.

"We work in the order of priorities. Frankly, we are short on manpower. So first things first," she said.

METROBRIEFS

Cops join cleanup drive

FOR THE QUEZON City police, their task of ensuring the conduct of clean and honest polls does not end on Election Day. It also includes getting rid of all the election materials that have accumulated in the city during the campaign period. In line with this, all policemen in the city have temporarily swapped their firearms for cleaning tools in preparation for their participation in the cleanup drive. According to Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, QCPD director, "This is still part of our election duties. We are just doing our part in maintaining cleanliness in our city." He added that the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's "Metro Gwapo" crew has its hands full cleaning up the tons of "election debris," particularly in the vicinity of schools used as voting precincts. "We are volunteering to help them (MMDA) out in the post-election cleanup drive which could take them weeks, particularly in Quezon City. I don't think we have to wait for them to formally ask us to do so," Gatdula said.

Jeannette I. Andrade

200 families lose homes

A FIRE razed 120 shanties in Parañaque City yesterday afternoon, leaving 200 families homeless. Arson investigators said the fire began in the house of Mae Vicente on Sunrise Street, Concorde Village, Barangay Tambo at 12:44 p.m. It was put out nearly two hours later. FO3 Vicente Aureliano said the fire broke out after Vicente left her stove unattended. Damage to property was estimated at over P6 million although no casualties or injuries were reported.

Camille Fallorina

'Protective' dads presence in Munti, Taguig explained

By Julie M. Aurelio

VOTERS IN MUNTINLUPA CITY stopped in their tracks on Monday when they saw Sen. Rodolfo Biazon going around several election precincts on election day.

In Taguig City, Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes was spotted doing the same thing.

Both men have something in common: Their sons hope to get elected to Congress.

Biazon's son, Muntinlupa Rep. Ruffy Biazon, is running for reelection while Reyes' son, Jet, is seeking a seat to represent Taguig's second district.

According to witnesses, Sen. Biazon went to several polling precincts in Buli Elementary School before proceeding to the Alabang Elementary School on Monday morning.

"We tried to stop him but when we arrived at the precincts, Biazon and his men were already nowhere to be found," newly-appointed city police chief. Supt Alfredo Valdez said.

Under the Fair Elections Act, only poll watchers, members of the Board of Election Inspectorate (BEI) and the Board of Canvassers are allowed in polling areas.

The younger Biazon, however, came to his father's defense, saying there was nothing illegal about the senator's actions.

"He was not inside the precinct. *Nasa labas lang siya* (he just stood outside). I appointed him as my poll watcher and authorized him to collect the fifth copy of election returns in my name," the congressman told the INQUIRER over the phone.

He added that his father only wanted to help him protect his votes.

"It's just a father helping out his son," Ruffy said.

In Taguig City, Reyes was spotted visiting the Tenement Elementary School, Technological University of the Philippines, Palar Elementary School, Silangan Elementary School, Upper Bicutan Elementary School and the EMS Signal Village Elementary School.

Nothing irregular

The environment secretary, however, did not enter the polling precincts but merely stood outside, watching the proceedings from a window.

The INQUIRER tried to contact Reyes on his cellular phone but was told that the secretary was busy taking another call.

Taguig city police chief Supt. Alfred Corpus, however, said there was nothing irregular about Reyes' actions.

"He is just guarding the votes of his son. This is expected," he said.

With Jenny Lynne Aguilar

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Scandal over US prosecutors deepens

WASHINGTON—THE RESIGNATION of US Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez's right-hand man has invigorated Democrats who want to see more heads roll in a deepening scandal over the sacking of federal prosecutors.

Deputy Attorney General Paul McNulty, a key Republican operative and ally of President George W. Bush, on Monday became the fourth official to resign over the firings.

The affair has sparked anger among Democrats, who say the nine attorneys were sacked for refusing to bow to political pressure to follow up legal cases which would benefit Bush's Republican party.

McNulty, the second ranking official in the US Department of Justice, said he planned to step down for personal reasons, likely this summer, once a replacement is found.

In a letter to Gonzalez, McNulty, 49, said he was leaving because "the financial realities of college-age children and two decades of public service lead me to a long overdue transition in my career."

McNulty played a key role in the Justice Department because he oversaw the office that managed US attorneys, and also dealt with department policy issues and efforts against corporate fraud.

Despite McNulty's high rank, he was not believed to have been closely involved with the decision to fire the eight attorneys.

"McNulty's resignation is a sign that top-level administration at the Justice Department may be crumbling under the pressure of ongoing revelations, and what is yet to be disclosed," House Judiciary Committee Chair John Conyers was quoted as saying by the Washington Post.

"With this news and as we press on with our investigation, we look forward to his cooperation." Democratic Sen. Charles Schumer also renewed his call for Gonzalez to face consequences.

"This administration owes us a lot better," Schumer said, calling it "ironic" that McNulty had to go while Gonzalez remained in charge.

House Democratic Caucus Chair Rahm Emanuel said Democrats "will continue our aggressive investigation into this serious matter," and added: "Resignations are no substitute for the truth."

Most of the attorneys were sacked in one fell swoop last December, ostensibly for poor performance. Gonzalez has admitted to mistakes in his handling of the issue but insisted no moves were made for political gain.

According to media reports, McNulty had grown distant from Gonzalez in recent months, and angered his boss by his February testimony to Congress in which he linked White House political officials to the firings.

McNulty testified that one of the fired prosecutors, Bud Cummins of Arkansas, had done nothing wrong but was dismissed to make room for a protege of White House senior advisor Karl Rove.

After McNulty's announcement that he planned to leave his post, Gonzalez issued a written statement in which he did not mention the scandal over the firings but praised McNulty's record.

"The Department of Justice will be losing a dynamic and thoughtful leader with the departure of Deputy Attorney General Paul McNulty," Gonzalez said in a statement.

He added that McNulty had been instrumental in efforts against corporate fraud and had made "significant contributions to establishing the rule of law in Iraq." In his earlier position as a US attorney in Virginia, McNulty prosecuted key cases linked to the US war on terror, including those of John Walker Lindh, Ahmed Omar Abu Ali and Zacarias Moussaoui. *AFP*

Leadership contest for Blair's successor starts

LONDON—NOMINATIONS OFFICIALLY opened on Monday for the election to succeed Tony Blair as Labor Party leader, as one of the two potential challengers to his most likely successor agreed to stand aside.

The seven-week election campaign formally began at 2:30 p.m. after a five-minute meeting of the Parliamentary Labor Party in London. Lawmakers now have until 12:30 p.m. on Thursday to register their support for candidates.

Each hopeful needs at least 44 nominations to have his or her name on the ballot paper, which will be sent out to more than three million Labor members and political levy-paying members of its affiliated organizations.

But just hours after the contest started, the campaign team for backbencher John McDonnell said former environment minister Michael Meacher was to stand down from the leadership race.

"I welcome Michael's friendly decision," McDonnell said.

"We are now working together to appeal to all Labor MPs to ensure that an election takes place to enable every Labor party member to participate in deciding the future of our party."

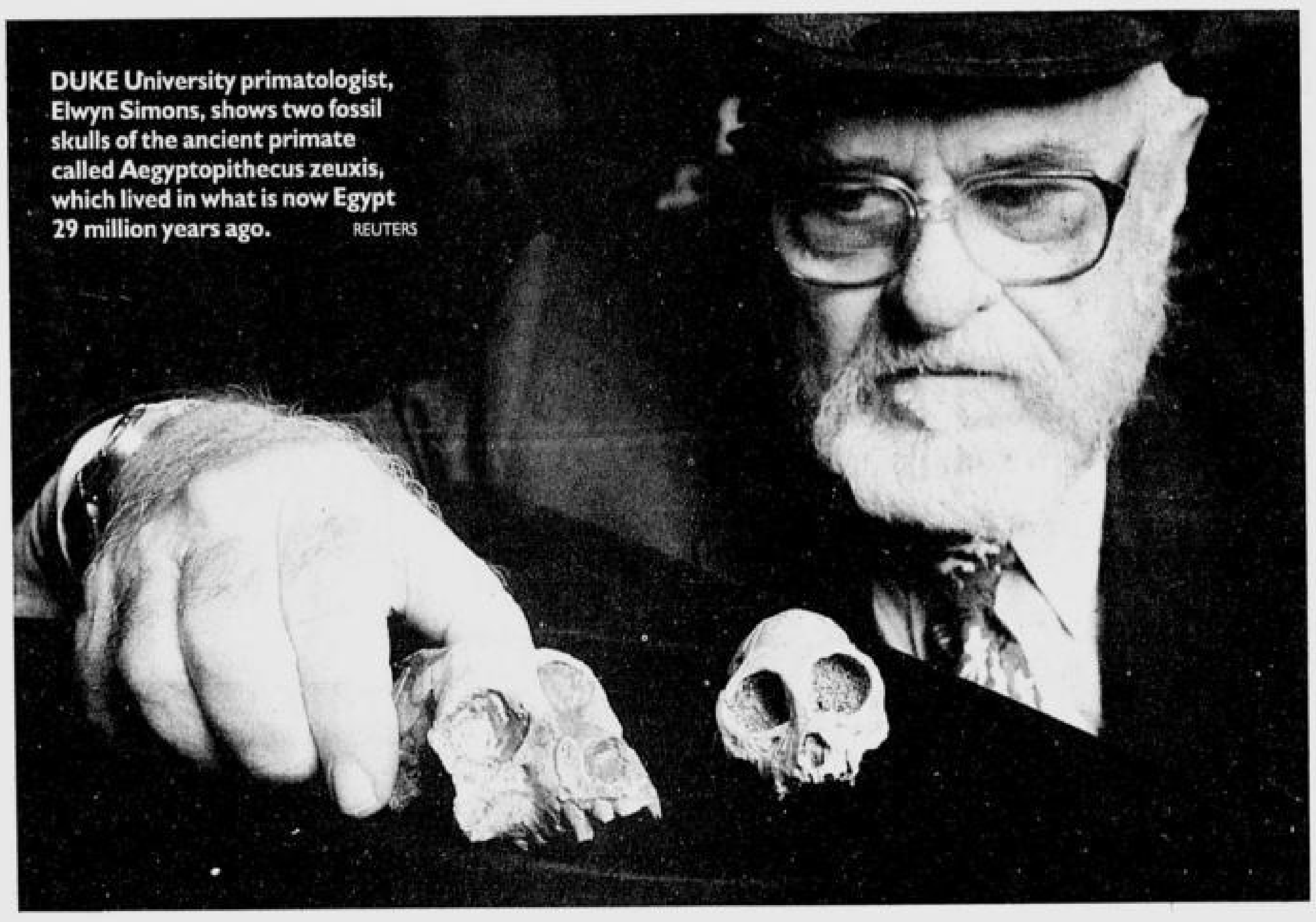
Finance minister Gordon Brown, the odds-on favorite, is now likely to go head-to-head with McDonnell, the chair of the Socialist group of Labor lawmakers, for the top job Blair has held since 1994.

Meacher and McDonnell failed to agree at a meeting last Friday who should stand down, prompting speculation that they were struggling to get the required backing, as both are left-wingers.

The pair joined Brown in a debate Sunday night in which all three accepted the need for Labor to change to redress a slump in the polls and recent local election losses to opposition parties.

But it was also marked by Brown's refusal to countenance what he said were Meacher and McDonnell's calls for a return to the "tax and spend" policies that were a Labor hallmark in its long years of opposition during the 1980s.

The leaders of two of the country's biggest trades unions—Labor's traditional backers—also called for a change in direction over issues like equal pay, employment rights, health service reform and public sector pensions. *AFP*



DUKE University primatologist, Elwyn Simons, shows two fossil skulls of the ancient primate called Aegyptopithecus zeuxis, which lived in what is now Egypt 29 million years ago. REUTERS

Ancestor of monkeys, apes and humans not so brainy

WASHINGTON—A MONKEY-LIKE ANimal seen as an ancestor of monkeys, apes and humans was not as brainy as expected, according to scientists who analyzed its nicely preserved 29-million-year-old skull.

The finding indicated that primate brain enlargement evolved later than once thought, the researchers said on Monday.

They analyzed a remarkably well-preserved fossilized skull of the little primate Aegyptopithecus zeuxis, which lived in the trees and ate fruit and leaves about 29 million years ago in warm forests in what is now an Egyptian desert.

A technique called microcomputerized tomography scanning—a computerized X-ray method also called micro-CT—allowed them to determine the dimensions of the animal's brain.

"What was astonishing is how small this brain is," Duke University primatologist Elwyn Simons, who led the study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, said in a telephone interview.

"You can also see it's a pretty darn primitive brain. It would be small for a monkey or an ape," Simons added. "So it's telling us that the speed of achievement of brain enlargement in primates was a little slower than perhaps we had thought." This skull of a small female was uncovered in a quarry southwest of Cairo in 2004. It was better preserved than another skull of a larger male of the species found in the same area in 1966.

Based on earlier finds, scientists had theorized the species had a relatively large brain. Instead, it had a brain that might have been even smaller than that of a modern lemur, a primate with primitive traits.

The condition of the earlier skull—"smashed up," as Simons put it—prevented the analysis possible with the newer one.

Simons said that when this primate lived, Africa was an island, limiting the competition for survival. Simons said brain enlargement may have evolved in this lineage after Africa became connected to Asia, bringing in more animals including new and dangerous predators.

"Brain-volume enlargement is favored under conditions of competition because you need to be smarter," Simons said. *Reuters*

THAKSIN AFP

Charges readied vs Thaksin

BANGKOK—THE THAI JUNTA'S TOP anticorruption body has recommended criminal charges against former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, a move that could get him back to Thailand for the first time since his ouster.

Lawyers for Thaksin, in exile since September after the military pushed him from power in what it said was a drive to root out corruption, said the billionaire former leader would return to fight in court if the case goes ahead.

The Assets Examination Committee, which the junta established after it seized power, ruled that Thaksin and his wife Pojaman should face charges over what it said was an illegal land deal in 2003.

"We agreed to charge both of them," committee spokesperson Sak Korseangruang said. It was not immediately clear if prosecutors would take action.

"If the Attoney General's Office files the case with court and the court orders the defendant to stand trial, then Thaksin will voluntarily return to Thailand," the former prime minister's lawyer Noppadon Pattama said.

"There would be no need to issue an arrest warrant," he told AFP. "We are fully prepared to fight this case."

Thaksin had been a widely popular leader who was credited with bringing economic stability back to Thailand in the wake of the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis.

But public anger erupted after his family managed to avoid paying taxes on an almost $2 billion sale of telecoms giant Shin Corp, which Thaksin himself founded, to a Singapore firm last year.

The sale set off massive street protests which led to his ouster.

The latest controversy concerns five hectares of land in central Bangkok that Thaksin's wife bought for $23 million in 2003 from a Bank of Thailand-run fund.

Investigators on the committee ruled that the transaction was illegal because Thaksin, as head of government, technically oversaw the fund and its finances, making the sale a conflict of interest.

Noppadon insisted that Thaksin had done nothing illegal in the sale.

"The bidding was transparent, and prime minister Thaksin did not abuse his power or interfere," the lawyer said.

It is the latest in a series of allegations of financial wrong-doing against Thaksin and his family.

Two of his children have been slapped with a $789-million tax bill over the Shin Corp sale, although no criminal charges have been filed so far. *AFP*

24 killed in Pakistan bomb blast

PESHAWAR—A POWERFUL BOMB EXploded in a hotel near a historic mosque in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar on Tuesday, killing at least 24 people and injuring dozens more, officials said.

The blast ripped through the Marhabar Hotel in the center of the city near the Afghan border, partly demolishing the three-storey building and sparking a fire, witnesses said.

Body parts and blood littered the road outside the hotel, they said. Television footage showed frantic passers-by wheeling badly mutilated bodies into local hospitals on wooden carts.

"Twenty-four people were killed and 25 injured," said Malik Zafar Azam, the law minister for North West Frontier Province, of which Peshawar is the capital.

He said the blast was thought to be linked to a suicide attack at nearby Charsadda on April 28 which killed 29 people and injured the country's interior minister.

Police said two women and a child were among the dead. Many of the wounded were in a critical condition. *AFP*

Suspect in British girl kidnapping identified

LISBON—A BRITISH MAN LIVING near a seaside resort in southern Portugal from where a British toddler went missing nearly two weeks ago is the main suspect in her disappearance, media reported on Tuesday.

The man, identified as 32-year-old Robert Murat by Sky News, was interrogated by police for hours on Monday before being allowed to return home during the night. Police have not announced making any arrests in the case.

According to media reports, the Briton, who is divorced and works in a local real estate agency, lives with his mother and his 3-year-old son in a villa in Praia da Luz around 100 meters from the Ocean Club complex where 4-year-old Madeleine McCann disappeared on May 3 while her parents ate in a nearby restaurant.

Investigators were particularly interested in an annex in the villa and in a mattress, Portuguese television channel Sic reported.

Media reports said the man had worked for the police in their inquiry as a translator and that he claimed to have a young daughter in Britain who looked like the missing girl.

Police had decided to search the house after a tip-off from journalist Lori Campbell, of Britain's Sunday Mirror, who found Murat's behavior suspicious, according to British media.

Police cordoned off the villa, keeping back journalists who have thronged to the area to cover a story that has sparked a outpouring of sympathy from celebrities, sports stars and the general public in Britain.

A Portuguese man and a woman reported to be German were also interrogated by police on Monday. *AFP*

DAVID BORNE (left) and Jaime Langridge (right) compete in the final round of the Bud Light Rock Paper Scissors Championship Tournament at the Mandalay Bay hotel-casino in Las Vegas on May 13. AP

Best in rock, paper, scissors face off for $50,000 prize

LAS VEGAS—AS IF IT WERE NECESSARY to further whip up a ballroom filled with raucous people already giddy on free-flowing beer, Matti Leshem was on the microphone Saturday afternoon trying to imbue some more excitement.

"This is the greatest sport ever to sweep the United States of America," bellowed Leshem, the co-commissioner of the 17-month-old USA Rock Paper Scissors League.

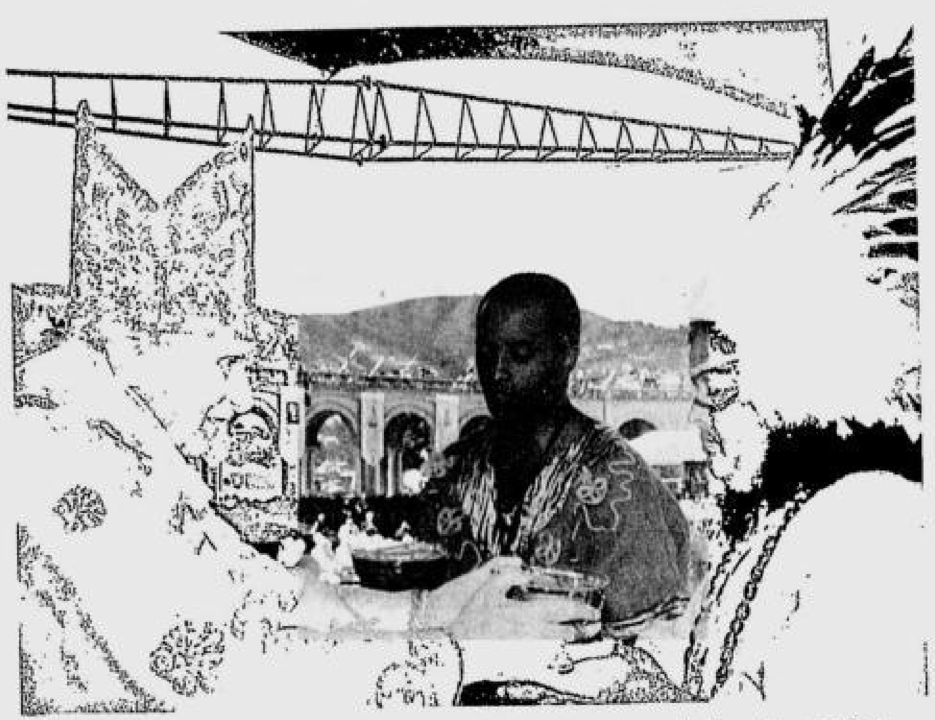
Leshem says he believes that, but several people in the crowd burst out in giggle fits.

"That's hilarious," said Chris Forestieri, 25, of Staten Island, NY, one of about 300 finalists flown to Las Vegas for the second annual Rock Paper Scissors national championship this weekend. "When he says that, all I can think of is the movie 'Dodgeball' when the announcer said something like that on ESPN."

Ah, but ESPN was actually here. And a game best remembered as the way children decide who gets the last Twinkie has matured into a real competition with a $50,000 first prize.

Leshem, a 44-year-old Hollywood producer who says he never plays Rock Paper Scissors for less than $100 a throw, founded the league last year after discovering there were leagues in Australia, Canada, Europe and elsewhere. *NYT*

Pope's comments irk Brazil's Indian tribes



POPE BENEDICT XVI meets faithful in traditional costumes during the opening Mass of the V General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Aparecida, Brazil. AP

SAO PAULO—POPE BENEDICT XVI came under criticism from Indian rights groups on Monday for insisting that Latin American Indians wanted to become Christian before European conquerors arrived centuries ago.

The Pope said Sunday that pre-Columbian people of Latin Amercan and the Caribbean were seeking Christ without realizing it. "Christ is the savior for whom they were silently longing," Benedict told a regional conference of bishops in Brazil.

The comments reinforce the view that the Pope is "Eurocentric," and fail to account for the fact that Indians were enslaved and killed by the Portuguese and Spanish settlers who forced them to become Catholic, said Paulo Suess, an adviser to Brazil's Indian Missionary Council, which is supported by the Roman Catholic Church.

Benedict "is a good theologian, but it seems he missed some history classes," Suess said.

The Pope told Latin American and Caribbean bishops that, "the proclamation of Jesus and of his Gospel did not at any point involve an alienation of the pre-Columbus cultures, nor was it the imposition of a foreign culture."

But Marcio Meira, who is in charge of Brazil's federal Indian Bureau, said Indians were forced to convert to Catholicism as the result of a "colonial process."

"As an anthropologist and a historian I feel obliged to say that, yes, in the past 500 years there was an imposition of the Catholic religion to the indigenous people," Meira said.

In Guatemala, where 42 percent of the nation's 12 million people call themselves Indian, the former presidential commissioner on racism said the Pope's comments were a step backward. *AP*

Iranian leader vows 'severe' retaliation if attacked by US

ABU DHABI—IRANIAN PRESIDENT Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Monday threatened "severe" retaliation if the United States attacked his country, which is locked in a standoff with the West over its nuclear program.

"They realize that if they make such a mistake the retaliation of Iran would be severe and they will repent," Ahmadinejad told a news conference in the United Arab Emirates.

He was speaking through an interpreter.

"All people know they cannot strike us. Iran is capable of defending itself. It is a strong country," said Ahmadinejad.

He said the West could not stop Tehran pursuing its nuclear energy program. "Superpowers cannot prevent us from owning this energy." The United States, which has a strong military presence in the Gulf, accuses Iran of wanting to produce nuclear weapons and has sought tougher UN sanctions against Tehran. Iran says it wants only to generate electricity to allow more oil exports.

Using stronger language than on Sunday when he called for US troops to leave the region, Ahmadinejad said Gulf countries should "get rid of" foreign forces, which he blamed for insecurity in the region.

"We in the Persian Gulf are faced by difficulties and enemies," he said. "They claim lack of security is the reason for their presence (but) the problem is the intervention of foreign powers." Tension between the United States and Iran has raised regional fears of a possible military confrontation that could hit Gulf economies and threaten vital oil exports. Washington has said it is committed to diplomacy but will not rule out the "military option."

Ahmadinejad said Iran had agreed to talk to the United States about Iraq to help the Iraqi people. The White House said on Sunday that US and Iranian officials would meet in the next few weeks in Baghdad about security in Iraq.

"They know that their plans have failed in Iraq, their vision is wrong. As long as you are plotting against the Iraqi people, failure will be there day after day," said Ahmadinejad.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, flying to Moscow after talks with regional leaders, said there was agreement on a need to stop a flow of arms and fighters across borders to insurgents in Iraq.

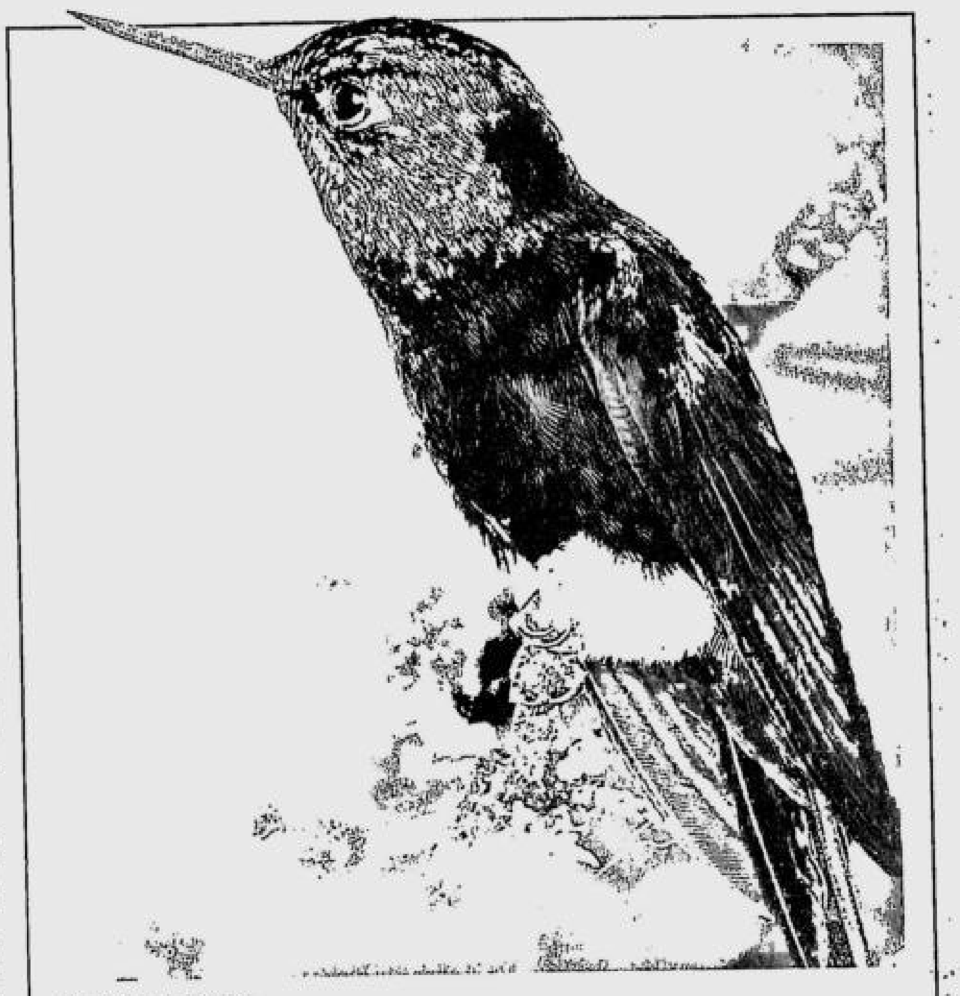
Ahmadinejad was speaking during a trip to the UAE, an ally of Washington, just days after a visit by US Vice President Dick Cheney.

Cheney met officials from the UAE and its larger neighbor Saudi Arabia to discuss issues including Iran, which he has described as a major concern to Sunni Arab states.

Dubai-based analyst Mustafa Alani said Tehran was trying to forge regional cooperation around joint interests and to push for an end to foreign troops in the region, a demand that Arab Gulf states would not support.

"The disappearance of the Americans in the region will make Iran emerge as a super regional power, this is a demand linked to their (Iranians) strategic ambitions," he said. "But they (Arab states) need foreign support in the region because there is a deep mistrust in the Iranians."

The UAE, which with its Gulf Arab neighbors has expressed concern about Tehran's nuclear plans, on Sunday voiced support for a moderate approach to Iran's crisis with the West. *Reuters*



NEW SPECIES

This photo released by BirdLife International shows a new species of hummingbird, called the Gorgeted Puffleg Eriocnemis Isabellaea, discovered in the Serrania del Pinche mountains, southwest Colombia. The highly distinct new species is characterized by an enlarged, iridescent throat patch in males and white tufts above the legs. AP

France's Chirac bids farewell to nation

PARIS—FRENCH PRESIDENT JACQUES Chirac ends his final full day in office on Tuesday with an evening farewell speech to the nation that he has led for 12 years.

Chirac, 74, was to address the French on national television before handing over power on Wednesday to President-elect Nicolas Sarkozy, a one-time political rival but a conservative like himself.

Stepping down from the presidency, Chirac will be closing out some four decades in politics. Chirac founded the neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic party, today transformed into the Union for a Popular Movement, or UMP, that Sarkozy headed before being elected president on May 6.

The outgoing president built up the mainstream right into a powerful political machine that, along with the Socialist Party, has been the dominating force in French politics. He still risks paying a price for his ambitious search for funds for his party. Without presidential immunity, Chirac could be subject to corruption investigations into alleged illegal party financing.

Chirac said his goodbye to Europe on Sunday in Berlin, insisting on the need for a strong role for Europe in a "multipolar" world—an issue that was a mainstay of foreign policy under Chirac but which so far remains unfulfilled.

The French rejection of a European constitution in a 2005 referendum dealt a blow to plans for tighter integration of the European Union, which France played a leading role in building. The concept of a "multipolar" world to counter the United States is dear to Chirac, and he made it come alive with the French-led opposition to the invasion of Iraq.

CHIRAC REUTERS

Chirac has no intention of retiring to his rural Correze region in central France. He plans to create a foundation devoted to sustainable development and dialogue between cultures, to be launched this fall.

The only other president to issue a televised farewell to the nation was Valery Giscard d'Estaing, on May 19, 1981, before turning over power to Socialist President Francois Mitterrand. With a much remembered final "au revoir," Giscard stood, made an exit and left an empty chair in the spotlight. *AP*

Colombia police chief in wiretapping axed

BOGOTA—IN THE BIGGEST SHAKE-UP of the security forces in years, Colombia's police chief and the head of police intelligence were forced to retire on Monday as the government alleged that police illegally tapped calls of opposition political figures, journalists and members of the government for the past two years.

The scandal multiplied US-ally President Alvaro Uribe's woes on a day judicial authorities also ordered the arrest of 20 politicians and business leaders, including five congressmen, on criminal conspiracy charges for signing a 2001 pact with illegal right-wing militias.

"The procedure is totally unacceptable, illegal and contrary to the policy of the government," said a statement by Minister of Defense Juan Manuel Santos.

The statement said the government had asked for and received the resignations of Gen. Jorge Daniel Castro, the national police chief, and Gen. Guillermo Chavez, his intelligence boss.

The statement did not specify whose phones had been tapped.

Gen. Oscar Naranjo, head of the judicial police, was named the new national police director. Naranjo has worked closely with US drug enforcement and intelligence agencies against the country's drug cartels.

Naranjo's promotion means another 10 police generals above him will have to resign in order to make way according to the institution's hierarchy system, said a police spokesperson.

While respected inside and out of Colombia, Naranjo has had his own embarrassments. Earlier this month a German court sentenced his younger brother to 5 1/2 years in prison for transporting 78 kilograms of cocaine.

The wiretapping scandal broke over the weekend when news magazines reported the interception of phone conversations that supposedly showed jailed far-right warlords, who surrendered under a peace pact, continuing to commit crimes behind bars.

Following a probe into the recordings, the government said it discovered that members of the police's intelligence service were responsible. It said it further determined that other people—who were not under criminal investigation—had also had their calls wiretapped for the past couple of years.

Political opposition figures frequently complain of harassment by the security services, including the tapping of their phones. Journalists in Colombia assume their phone conversations are recorded by intelligence agencies, domestic and foreign.

Uribe's most vocal critic in congress, Sen. Gustavo Petro, told Caracol radio that with a massive increase of the security services and intelligence-gathering, "it was a policy built by President Uribe, who today is a victim of his own invention."

The highly decorated Castro took over the national police in November 2003, making him one of the longest survivors of the Uribe administration.

His predecessor was forced to resign after a series of corruption scandals involving different police departments.

The wiretapping scandal is hugely embarrassing to a government struggling over the arrests of some of Uribe's closest allies for allegedly benefiting from ties to the paramilitaries, who in a decade-long reign of terror killed thousands of suspected rebel sympathizers and stole land from tens of thousands of peasants.

The congressmen ordered arrested Monday brought to 14 the number of senators and representatives implicated in the so-called para-political scandal.

All were accused of benefiting—at the ballot box or otherwise—from close ties to the violent militias.

The scandal has badly marred the credibility of Uribe, the Bush administration's closest South American ally, and could jeopardize US military aid to Colombia, the biggest recipient of assistance from Washington outside of the Middle East and Afghanistan.

The recordings of the far-right warlords' conversations has also put pressure on the peace accord. The deal was championed by Uribe but criticized by the opposition as too lenient on the illegal paramilitaries, responsible for some of the worst atrocities of the near half century civil conflict.

In Monday's statement, Santos said that the government had ordered the prosecutor's office to investigate the content of the warlords' intercepted phone calls and threatened to withdraw the peace deal's benefits, including limited prison time and the suspension of extradition warrants, for any eventually found guilty. *AP*

Manhunt launched for 3 missing US soldiers in Iraq

BAGHDAD—THE SEARCH FOR THREE missing American soldiers abducted after an attack south of Baghdad continued Monday as the al-Qaida group that claimed responsibility for the ambush said the soldiers would never be found.

"What you are doing searching for your soldiers will be in vain and lead to nothing but fatigue and unrest," said a statement posted on jihadist websites by the Islamic State of Iraq, an umbrella insurgent group that includes al-Qaida in Mesopotamia. "Your soldiers are in our hands. If you desire safety do not look for them."

The statement suggested that the group was reveling in a manhunt that required a hefty deployment of resources at a time when Congress has pressed the American military to show progress here by September.

About 4,000 American soldiers have been scouring the orchards and villages near Mahmudiya, a predominantly Sunni Arab farming town where the attack occurred early Saturday morning. A similar search involving 8,000 soldiers last June for two American soldiers captured in a town nearby forced commanders to cancel or delay operations in other parts of Iraq until after they were found dead four days later.

On Monday, the American military reported the deaths of four American soldiers, a Marine and an airman throughout Iraq.

Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, the top military spokesperson in Baghdad, said Monday that the search effort would continue. Of the four American soldiers and one Iraqi soldier who died in the ambush, he said in a statement, one American was still unidentified. "We are using every asset and resource available to the United States and our Iraqi allies in these efforts," he said.

The statement from the Islamic State of Iraq was its second regarding Saturday's attack, and it called the war in Iraq "a competition," according to a translation by the Site Institute, which tracks jihadist websites. The abduction, it suggested, was an effort to even the score after Caldwell's announcement earlier this month that American troops had killed Muharib Abdul Latif al-Jubouri, a senior leader of al-Qaida in Mesopotamia. It went on to cite the rape last year of a teenage girl by American troops near where the abduction occurred.

The area south of Baghdad where both abductions of soldiers occurred, known as the "triangle of death," has been perpetually difficult for the American military to control.

Sheik Ali al-Hatim, the leader of the Dulaimi tribe in Mahmudiya, said the ambush on Monday bore the hallmarks of another coordinated assault on American troops—an attack in January in Karbala by gunmen dressed in fake American military uniforms. One soldier was killed and four were kidnapped and later found dead. *New York Times News Service*

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

WB board to decide Wolfowitz's fate

WASHINGTON—THE WORLD BANK WAS TO DECIDE THE FUture of its president Paul Wolfowitz on Tuesday after a scathing report accused him of breaking the rules by securing a generous pay deal for his girlfriend.

As the panel of bank executives warned of a crisis of leadership at the international lender, US President George W. Bush rushed to support Wolfowitz, a former deputy defense secretary and an architect of the Iraq war.

A month of scandal surrounding Wolfowitz has divided the bank's 185 member states, with the United States standing by Wolfowitz and European governments and others pushing for his exit.

Wolfowitz, 63, was to appear before the 24 member executive board on Tuesday when his fate will be decided.

The special panel set up by the board to look into the scandal said Wolfowitz clearly violated the bank's code of conduct in arranging the pay and promotion package for his girlfriend and fellow bank employee, Shaha Riza. The report echoed the previous findings of an ethics panel.

"Wolfowitz did not comply with the provision in his contract that required him to 'avoid any conflict of interest, real or apparent,'" the panel wrote regarding Riza's reassignment and promotion after Wolfowitz became boss.

It also found Wolfowitz had violated the bank code of conduct "requiring that he withdraw from 'participation in deliberations or decision-making' when he involved himself in the specific terms of Ms Riza's external assignment."

Documents released by the bank's executive directors have exposed Wolfowitz's hand in a pay package worth nearly $200,000 that was awarded to Riza when she was reassigned to the US State Department in September 2005 to prevent any conflicts of interest with her new boss.

"These actions show that the relationship between Mr. Wolfowitz and Ms Riza went beyond the appearance of a conflict of interest and constitued an actual conflict of interest situation." The investigative panel recommended the board "consider whether Mr. Wolfowitz will be able to provide the leadership needed to ensure that the bank continues to operate to the fullest extent possible in achieving its mandate." It said it had considered Wolfowitz's version of events but "decided that nothing in it alters the central conclusions reached in this report." In what the panel described as the "central theme" of the matter, Wolfowitz "saw himself as the outsider to whom the established rules and standards did not apply." It also cited "questionable judgment and a preoccupation with self-interest over institutional best interest."

WOLFOWITZ AFP

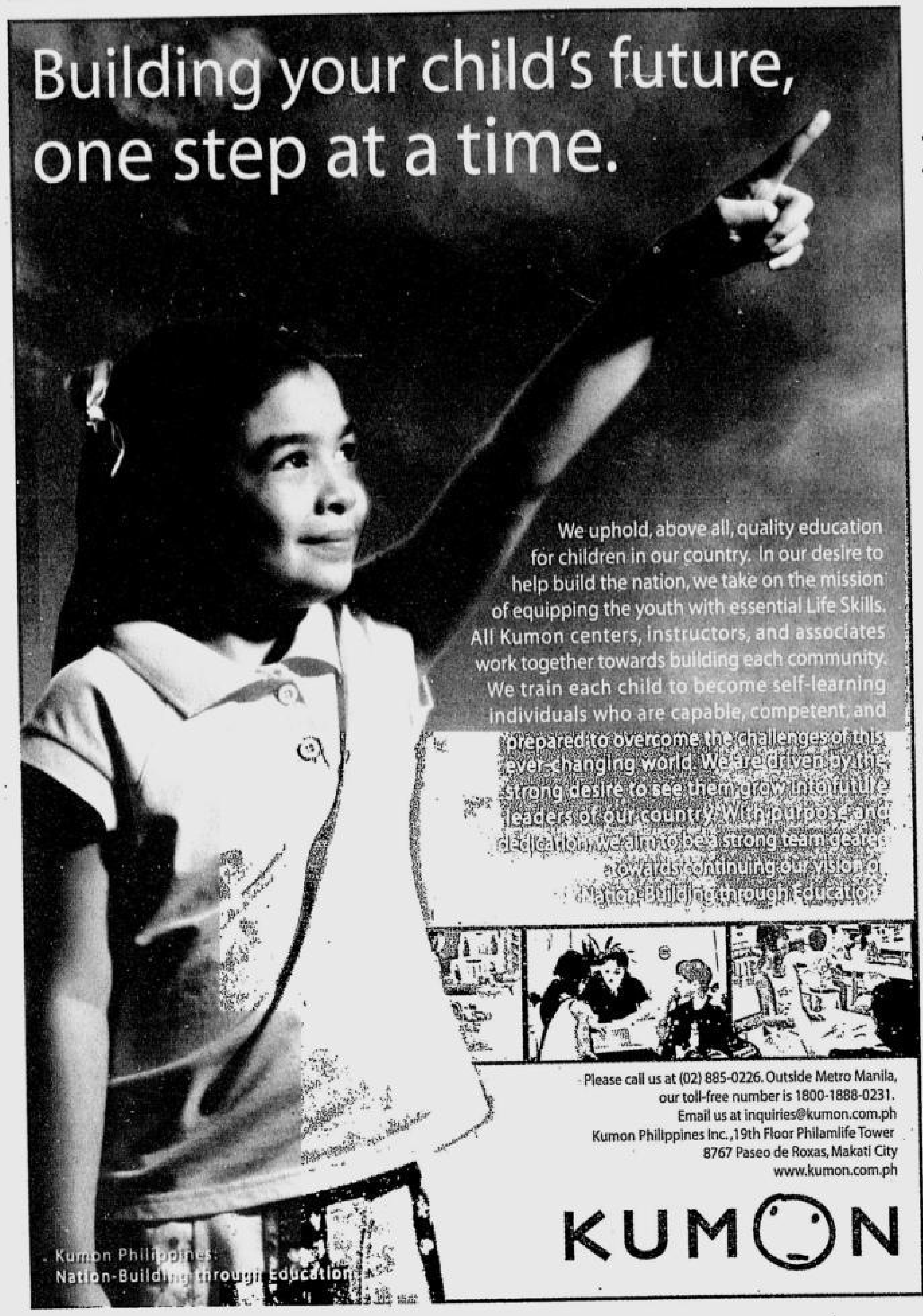
Bush continued to stand behind Wolfowitz.

"Paul Wolfowitz is having an opportunity to present his case before the World Bank, and they've got their own process. But the president supports him, and that remains unchanged," said White House spokesperson Tony Snow.

The Financial Times reported that the United States was seeking an "emergency" conference call of Group of Seven miristers to persuade them to let Wolfowitz keep his job.

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed to AFP that Washington was trying to organize the conference call, but denied the newspaper's "emergency" description.

AFP



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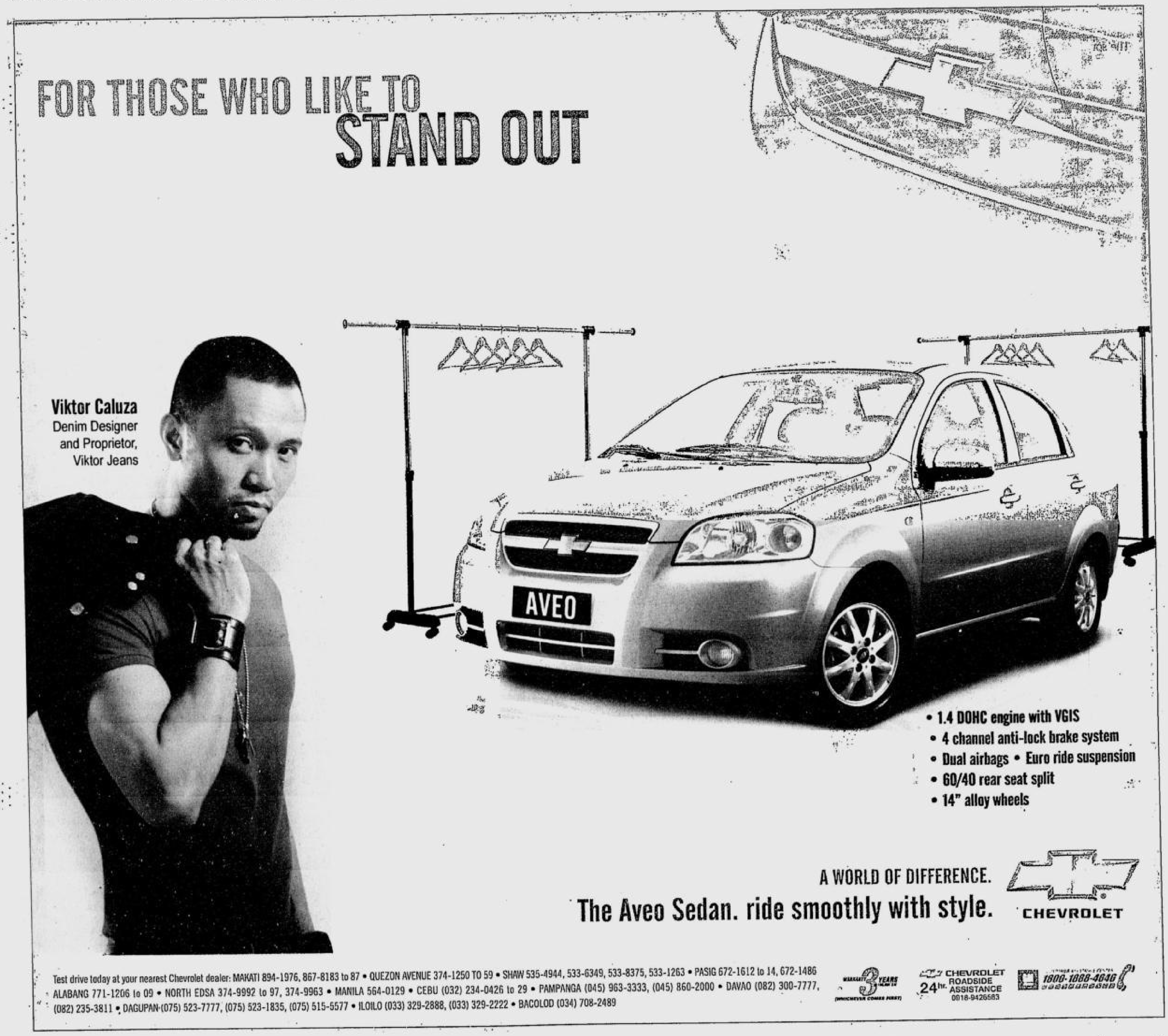

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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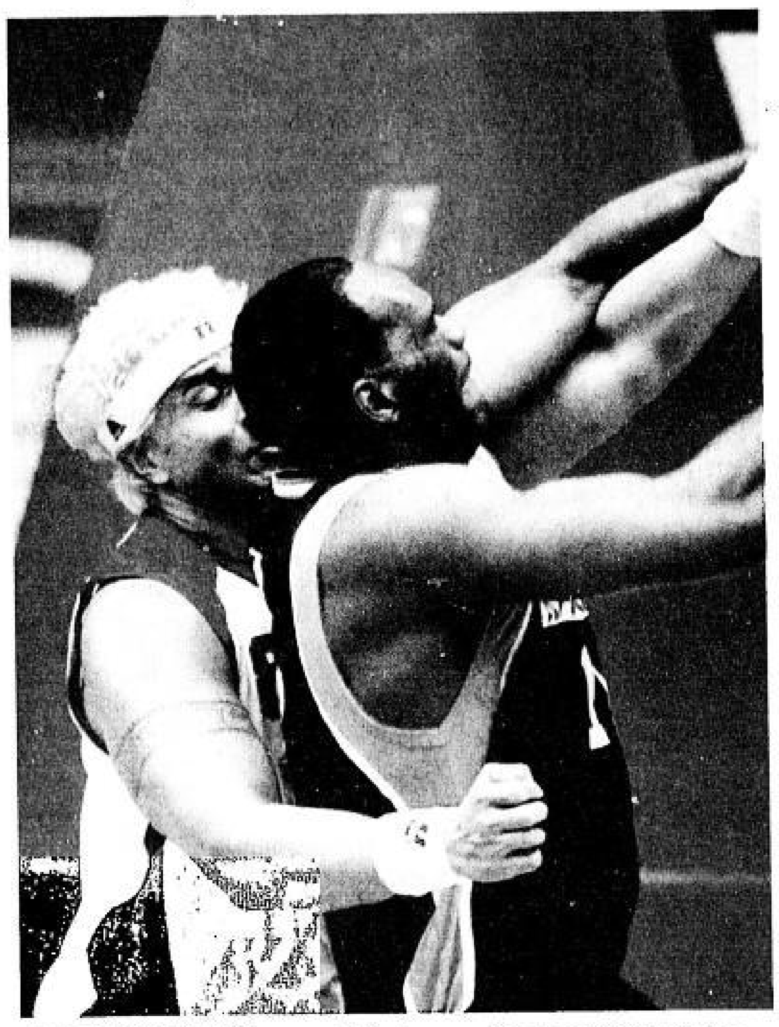

ASI TAULAVA (left) is expected to have problems underneath the boards when the Philippines next plays Syria and its huge frontline.

Kazakhs hand RP five second straight defeat

TEHRAN—WITH MASSIVE HOPES RIDING ON ITS SHOULDERS, the Philippine team is hoping to take in yet another lesson after taking another loss flush on the chin.

The San Miguel-RP Team dropped its second straight match here, bowing to Kazakhstan's Astana Tigers, 75-66, Monday night in the 18th Fiba-Asia Champions Cup at the Azadi Sports Complex.

Coach Chot Reyes wasted no time putting the loss in a positive perspective.

"What is important is for us to continue to play together, not to abandon each other and what we're trying to build," he said. "All of these are part of our learning process and these games will help us down the road so we have to deal with it, continue to get better and play as a team."

The Philippine Team's goal is to make the Olympics in Beijing next year. It can do so by finishing, at the very least, second to China in the Fiba-Asia men's championship in Japan in late July.

The loss was the second in as many Group B outings for the Nationals, who are using this stint to hone up for the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) basketball championship, the tournament that serves as the qualifier for the Fiba-Asia tilt.

Grossly beaten off the boards in their initial encounter, where the Nationals grabbed just 27 rebounds in a 101-88 loss to Iran's Saba Battery Club, the RP squad collected 48 rebounds this time around, staying in step with the 49 of the taller, more athletic Kazakhs.

What they couldn't keep up with, though, was the Kazakhs offense and bruising defense.

"They came out and played hard while we didn't play particularly well," said Reyes. "We're still trying to find out rhythm."

After being held to just six points in their initial outing, Danny Seigle exploded for team highs of 21 points and 10 rebounds despite suffering a sprain.

Yevgeny Issakov, a sweet-shooting 6-foot-9 forward, had 25 points and 11 rebounds to lead Astana, which ironically played better when 7-foot Russian import Sergey Smirnov rode the bench due to foul trouble.

The Nationals showed signs of fire, but only in stretches.

STANDINGS	W	L
Group A		
Lebanon	1	0
Qatar	1	1
India	0	1
Group B		
Iran	2	0
Syria	2	0
Kazakhstan	2	1
Philippines	0	2
Bahrain	0	2

GAMES TODAY
(*Tehran time*)
4:15 p.m.—Iran vs Kazakhstan
6:30 p.m.—Lebanon vs India
8:45 p.m.—Philippines vs Syria

KAZAKHS / A30

Red Bull to trade Villanueva to Purefoods?

By Musong R. Castillo

ENRICO VILLANUEVA, ONE OF THE STRONGest pure centers in the PBA, is said to be at the center of a rumoured trade, with unconfirmed reports yesterday saying he is on the verge of being sent to one of the teams under the San Miguel umbrella.

Red Bull officials have clammed up on the rumors, but a source close to the team said the Bulls are looking to deal the 6-foot-6 former Ateneo ace to Purefoods, which has long been in need of a legitimate center.

The source, who spoke on the condition that he not be named, said that any possible deal would involve cash considerations.

But a Villanueva deal will run through a wall of complications.

Commissioner Noli Eala reminded the INQUIRER in an interview yesterday that the league has put in place a scheme preventing one-sided deals.

The commissioner's office has asked teams to draw up a restricted list of three players who can only be traded for players on the same list of other teams. That means any Villanueva trade to Purefoods will include either reigning MVP James Yap or former Red Bull standout Kerby Raymundo, both cornerstones of the Giants' franchise.

Eala said that the only way for Red Bull to work around the restricted list is if the team petitions the league to have Villanueva relegated to the regular list of players.

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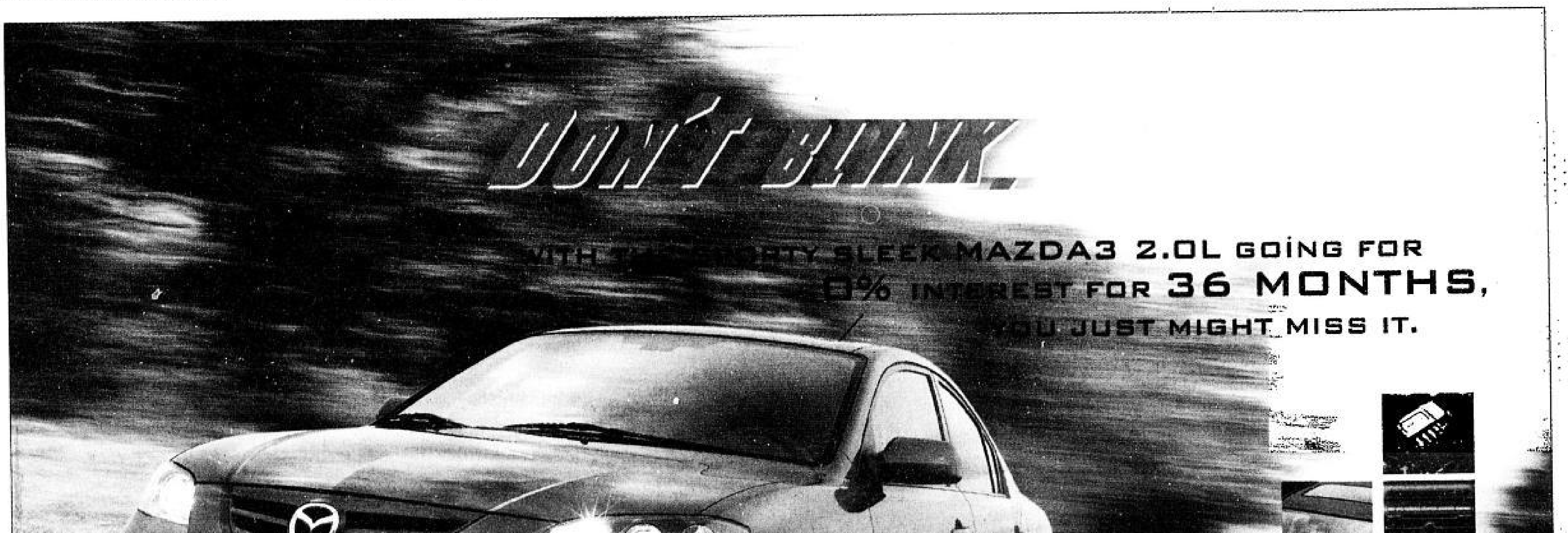

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C. Lhuillier zaps Henkel; B. Pier score

By Jasmine W. Payo

COACH LUIGI TRILLO FOUND FEW REAsons to worry about Ryan Reyes, Henkel Sista's sensational Fil-Am recruit.

His hunch proved right as his Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala squad subdued Henkel Sista, 78-69, yesterday for its fourth straight victory in the PBL Unity Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

"We didn't treat him (Reyes) special, we were more more worried about the other guys," said Trillo. "Ryan is dominating, but we knew coach Caloy (Garcia) wanted the other players to get involved."

Reyes, a 6-foot-1 point guard from California, delivered his lowest output of nine points after averaging 17 markers in his first three outings.

The Moneymen's starters, led by veteran Eric dela Cuesta who shot 15 points, played major roles in halting the Super Sealers' four-game winning streak.

In the second game, Harbour Centre slipped past Dazz 'Sang Patak, 78-72, and joined the Moneymen on top.

Jason Castro, who topscored with 18 points, combined with Beau Belga in the final five minutes to thwart the Kitchen Specialists' rally.

"I don't know what's the problem, we can't play steady," rued Harbour coach Jorge Gallent.

GAMES TOMORROW
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Toyota Balintawak vs San Miguel-Magnolia
4 p.m.—Burger King vs Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala

Trillo said the Super Sealers' poor three-point shooting helped the Moneymen keep their share of the lead with the defending champions at 7-2.

Henkel's streaky shooting duo of Noy Javier and Fritz Bauzon converted only three of a combined 14 attempts from beyond the arc.

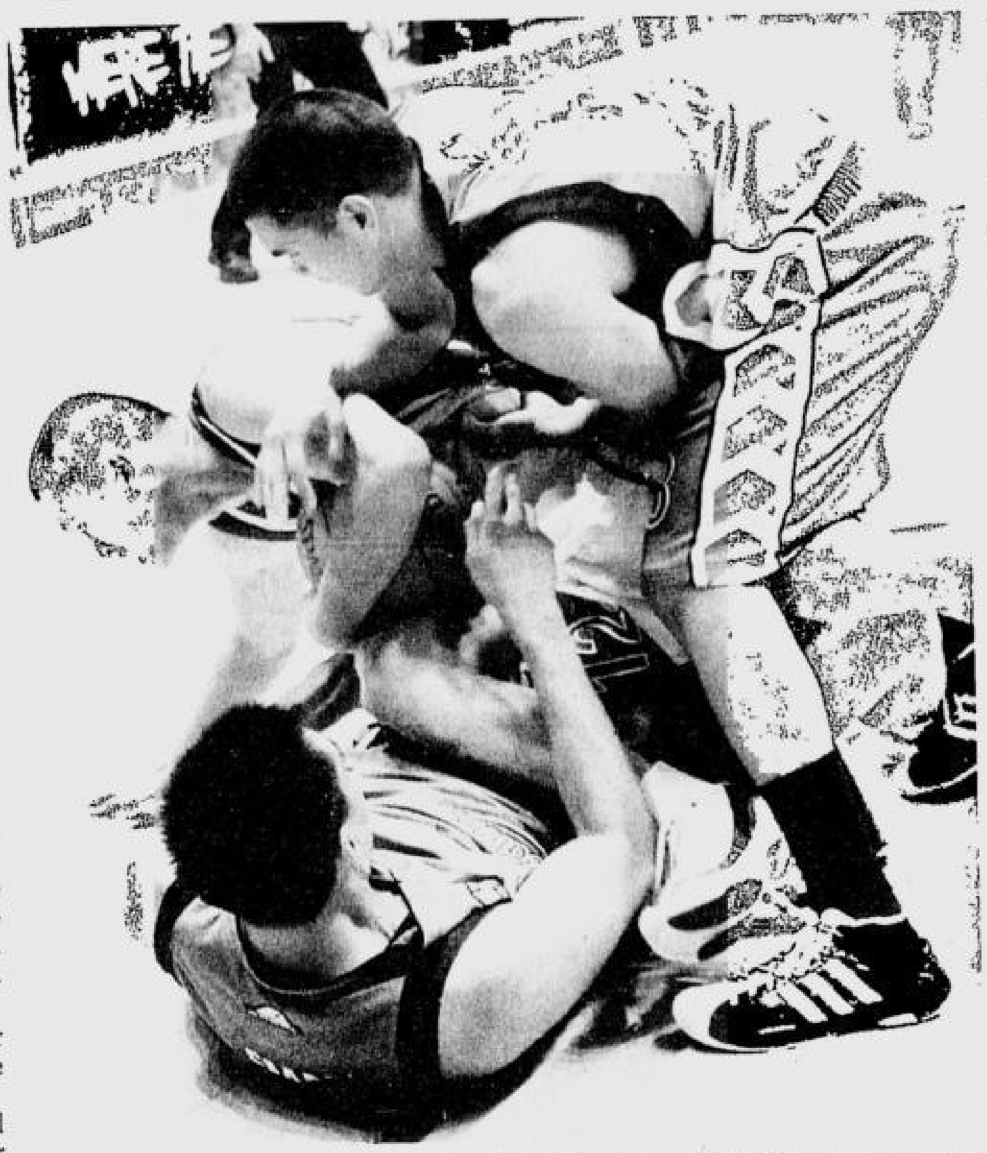
"We were lucky that they didn't make their three-point shots, otherwise it would have been a different story," he said.

With the victories, the Moneymen and Batang Pier only need to win one of their three remaining games to clinch a playoff for the two outright semifinal berths.

Working behind Dela Cuesta and Macky Escalona, the Moneymen jumped off to a strong start and took a 39-28 halftime lead which they padded to 53-39 in the third period.

Scoring mostly on fastbreaks, Escalona contributed 13 points and five assists. Veteran Ariel Capus scored 12 points on top of eight assists.

"The guys are sacrificing more—(Ken) Bono, (Doug) Kramer, Dela Cuesta, Escalona—they're getting more guys involved," said Trillo.



HENKEL Sista's Semigue Eman (on his back) and Ryan Reyes (right) dispute possession with Cebuana Lhuillier's Eric dela Cuesta.

INQUIRER PHOTO / AUGUST DELA CRUZ

The Super Sealers, who slipped to fifth at 4-5, trimmed the margin to 73-65 in the final minute but Kramer completed a three-point play to increase the lead to 76-65.

Castro put Batang Pier on top at 74-70 after the Kitchen Specialists wrested the lead, 69-68, with a run anchored on Ardy Larong.

The scores:

First Game

C. LHUILLIER 78—Dela Cuesta 15, Escalona 13, Capus 12, Kramer 10, Bono 9, Sta. Maria 6, Oreta 5, Grijaldo 4, Dela Peña 4, Yee 0, Burtscher 0 Solis 0.

HENKEL SISTA 69—Malabanan 12, Eman 12, Reyes 9, Javier 7, Bauzon 7, Matias 6, Bonus 6, Villamin 6, Alfad 4, Ebuen 4, Misa 0, Yambao 0.

Quarters: 24-17, 39-28, 59-47, 78-69

Second Game

HARBOUR CENTRE 78—Castro 18, Belga 15, Lanete 14, Alonzo 12, Araña 9, Asoro 5, Fernandez 3, Vergara 2, Williams 0, Intal 0, Gamboa 0.

DAZZ 72—Larong 18, Juntilla 14, Bucao 11, Mercado 10, Raymundo 8, Butel 4, Rodriguez 4, Sanz 3, Almacin 0, Cenita 0, Moreño 0, Labagala 0.

Quarters: 26-13, 37-34, 59-54, 78-72

Kazakhs hand RP five 2nd setback

From page A29

"We have to continue working at it, learning to come out and play hard for 40 minutes," said Reyes.

The Nationals next face Syria's Al-Jalaa at 8:45 p.m. Tuesday (1:15 a.m. Wednesday, Manila time).

Reyes said the lessons picked up in the team's last loss would prove most valuable.

"Among all the Asian teams, Kazakhstan is the most European-like in their game and the experience of playing against them will be put to good use later on," he said.

The Syrians will be led by seven-footer Bernard Jonsand many-time PBA import Julius Nwosu. Nwosu said his team also boasts three naturalized players from Brazil. Syria is coming off a 78-48 manhandling of Bahrain's Al-Muharraq also Monday.

"It will be the same thing, us having problems with the other side's big men," said Reyes. "Syria beat Kazakhstan (90-74 last Saturday), so that gives us an idea of how hard that game is gonna be."

The scores:

KAZAKHSTAN 75—Issakov 25, Shpekht 15, Smirnov 13, Yargaliyev 7, Biryulin 5, Panomarev 4, Tyutyunik 3, Skornyakov 2, Dzorhanov 1, Voyeikov 0.

SMB-RP 66—Seigle 21, Caguioa 18, Villanueva 8, Taulava 6, Raymundo 6, Ritualo 3, Alapag 2, Hontiveros 2, Helterbrand 0, De Ocampo 0, Dela Cruz 0, Pennisi 0.

Quarters: 14-16; 33-27; 55-45; 75-66.

Pacquiao KO'd: Anatomy of defeat

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

EVERYBODY WHO CARED SWORE IT WAS not the right fight for him.

But Manny Pacquiao obviously wanted to also change the face, if not the heart, of Philippine politics.

The boxing super hero could not be blamed.

He must've felt he had the perfect weaponry for the big fight at the polls.

He has the money, more than he could dream of.

With his popularity and appeal, Pacquiao could indeed be invincible in a political skirmish.

OK, he would always have the famous Freddie Roach inside the ring to insulate him from defeat.

But did it help any that, in his fight for a seat in Congress, Pacquiao had President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as both promoter and chief second?

* * *

Nup, GMA was a minus factor, am sure of that.

Nup, that was not boxing expert Hermie Rivera, flown from California to work as Pacquiao political water boy, speaking.

That honest statement was from our hardworking correspondent, Aquiles Zonio, in Gen. Santos City.

But where did Pacman really go wrong?

Well, if you want Pacman to be a successful politician, get rid of the local bad guys tailing his ass.

What do you mean?

Two issues: Jeng Gacal was the only lawyer in town who was slapped by a scion of a fishing tycoon. He sued but, in the end, apparently sold his case to his foe. Gacal is therefore synonymous to a bad image.

* * *

What else?

Pacman's mayoral bet is also perceived as corrupt. It was during her term as mayor when a prime seaside public park was sold to RSBS.

But didn't some people there vote for Pacquiao's foe in order to save him from the hell of Philippine politics?

I don't think so, sir. The main issues raised were his lack of education; and that he's a yes-man of Malacañang, while South Cotabato, Sarangani and GenSan are traditionally opposition country.

So, as a resident, how do you feel?

Sayang. The guy is sincere to serve. People here have never learned their lesson. I think this place is doomed.

* * *

You could call that foregoing conversation anatomy of a knockout.

Yes, it's easy to say that, in Pacquiao's case, he honestly and sincerely wanted to help free his provincemates from the obscene grip of poverty.

He had, in fact, bared this in earlier pronouncements, capped by that challenge after his KO win over Jorge Solis in Texas last month, wherein he dared critics to change places with him: "*Kung gusto ninyo, palit na lamang tayo ng puso para maramdaman ninyo ang awa ko sa mga mahihirap na tao* (If you want, let's swap hearts so you'd know how I feel about the poor)."

Aquiles Zonio says that, in the latest Namfrel tally, Pacquiao's foe, Darlene Custodio, "is ahead by 9,000 votes, with the margin increasing."

Manny Pacquiao has walked straight into a knockout punch.

Of course, he's no stranger to the hard floor.

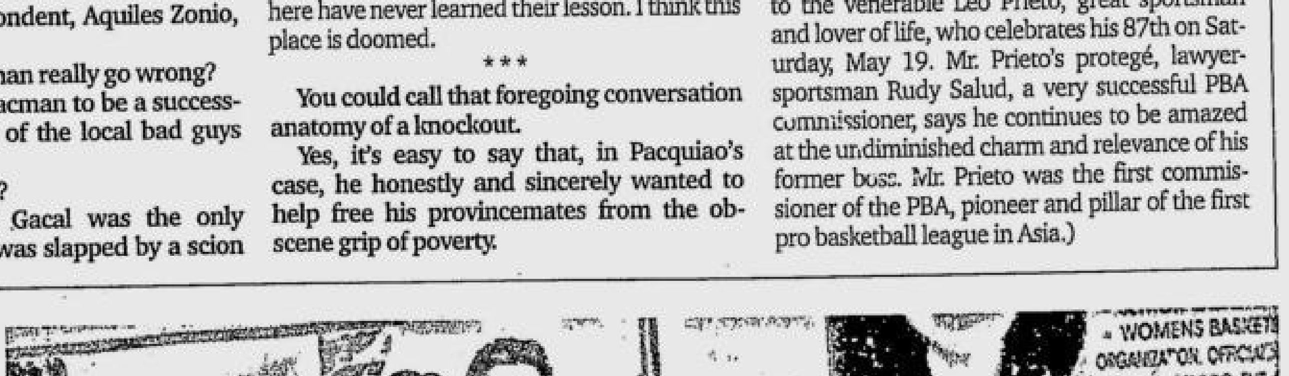
He had a terrible boyhood.

He had to suffer a cold stoppage, right in the first round, against Rustico Torrecampo when he was still a raw, hungry flyweight.

With a champion's heart, this KO in the political field should also teach Pacquiao to be wiser and fight harder en route to more significant victories.

* * *

(PIONEER AND PILLAR: Birthday greetings to the venerable Leo Prieto, great sportsman and lover of life, who celebrates his 87th on Saturday, May 19. Mr. Prieto's protegé, lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud, a very successful PBA commissioner, says he continues to be amazed at the undiminished charm and relevance of his former boss. Mr. Prieto was the first commissioner of the PBA, pioneer and pillar of the first pro basketball league in Asia.)



CAGING CHAMPS

Philippine College of Criminology coach Bang Tumapat receives the championship trophy from Jean Alabanza, sports director of tournament sponsor Mighty Filter Corp., after his wards topped Division B of the recent Mighty Filter MBT Women's Cup held at the Metro gym in Mandaluyong.

Boxing's Piñol brothers connect in polls

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

SUPERSTAR BOXER MANNY PACquiao might be on the verge of a knockout loss against incumbent Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio, but Philippine boxing has its share of winners at the polls, too.

Take the case of the solid Piñol brothers in North Cotabato who are all deeply involved in boxing.

The most popular of them all is outgoing North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel "Manny" Piñol. The former sports journalist ended his three terms as governor, but leads the race for vice governor of the province.

He has vowed to continue supporting the province's boxing programs, which he has ably nurtured in tandem with friend Jesus N. Sacdalan, who is leading the race for governor.

Piñol's brother Efren also leads by a mile in the mayoral race in Magpet, one of the towns of North Cotabato. Efren, like Manny and the rest of Piñol family, is a fixture in boxing events held in the province.

Another brother, Lito, also leads the race for mayor of the town of M'lang, thus ensuring another big boxing supporter in the province.

But the biggest reveleation is yet another Piñol sibling, Jun, who is showing the way in the congressional race for the district.

"To those who prayed and contributed their efforts, our family's victories are dedicated to you," said Soc Piñol, youngest brother of the winning four, in a message to supporters. "My brothers' victories are also victories for boxing in our province. We can now continue to enhance boxing in our area."

MANNY PIÑOL

SPORTSWATCH

Fifa citation for PFF head Romualdez

ROMUALDEZ

PHILIPPINE FOOTBALL FEDERATION PRESIDENT Johnny Romualdez was honored recently in Kuala Lumpur by the international football federation (Fifa) for spearheading the country's football grassroots development program. No less than Fifa president Joseph Blatter pinned the AFC (Asian Football Confederation) Stars of Asia Bronze award on the Filipino official. AFC president Mohammed Bin Hammam likewise handed a plaque to Romualdez, who attended the May 7 rites with other Asian football leaders for the AFC's distinguished service awards. Romualdez, who assumed the reigns at PFF in November 2003, was cited for leading the "Kasibulan" program and bringing the game to the masses. Last March 31, Romualdez was also elected vice president of the Asean Football Federation.

AAXS
15
AAXS 18
AAXS 4

MEMBERS of the Xavier School Alumni Association pose for posterity after bagging the recent 10th Chiang San Ching Memorial Cup Championship. Standing (from left) are assistant coach Patrick Aquino, Kit Dichaves, Jert Yao, coach Caesar Wongchuking, team manager Joseph Whang, Benedict Chua, Dexter Lee, Mike Sy (co-captain), Paolo Pe, Jeric Teng, Paul Chua (captain), Mako Tan, Bon Syiaco and assistant coach Lito Vergara. In the front row are IC Sta Maria, Justin Qua (MVP), Cons Ong, Chris Tiu, Randy Chua.

Checkmate provincial classes under way

THE MILO CHECKMATE CHESS CLINICS GET GOING IN PROVINCIAL centers starting today. The clinics will also select the members of the Australian-bound Checkmate team this year. The clinic areas and their respective dates are: Cabuyao, Laguna (May 16-20), from 8 a.m. to 12 noon daily at Angels In Heaven School at 138 Bonifacio Street.; Vigan (May 16-20), from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily at Corinthian Montessori of Vigan; Dagupan (May 21-25), from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at Nepo Mall, and Plaridel, Bulacan (May 21-25), from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at Walter Mart-Plaridel.

GCAP derby gets going at SJ Coliseum

SEVENTY MATCHES ARE ON TAP IN THE GENTLEMEN COCKERS ASSOCIation of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-cock derby series today at the San Juan Coliseum. Backed by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, the derby will start at 5 p.m. Two more derbies will be staged before the GCAP Cocker of the Year winner is decided. The Grand Championship derby will be held on May 30. The top 15 contenders so far are Rodolfo Pineda, Pol Estrellado, Totoy Haruta, Tony Tan, Jack Yap, Rio Salceda, Boy de Roca, Ellian Nagano, sabong idol Patrick Antonio, Mayor Buddy Dunca, Jingco Brothers, Jet Fernando, Mayor Nene Aguilar, Paeng Arciaga, Romy Castro, Otto Balboa and Lito Orillaza.

102 fights up in Roligon Summer Heat today

THE OPENING ROUND OF "SUMMER HEAT" 4-COCK DERBY SIZZLES TOday at Roligon Mega Cockpit with Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone as sponsors. The first of 102 fights start at 4 p.m. This event comes on the heels of last month's 238-entry "King of the Ring" 5-cock derby won by Terry Santos, Ed Uytiepo, Boying Aguilar, Allan Siaco, Vic Vigilla and Zaldy Alonsabe, who emerged as fastest-win champion. Hosts Danny Ty and Aba Badiola have put up a guaranteed prize of P1.3 million for an entry fee of P5,500 for today's event. The second elimination round will be on Friday.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Strong Friend (6), Sotm Breaker (5), Battle Plan/Santo Santito (4), Glorious Quest (1)

Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—My Rabonnie (1), Best Strike (10), Holy King (5), Speed King (3), Red Hot Water (1)

Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Prince Aidan (2), Inca (2), Kaibigan (4), Friendly Venture (7)

Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—My Lucky One (5), Hepburn (11), West N Wild (9), Look Who's Playing (7), Kaligatan (13)

Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Jewelmer (4), Gemstone (5), Power Negotiator (1), Top Of D'Line (6)

Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Hurry Prince (9), Morning Nell (5), Fair Urduja (4), Kalashnikov (1), Kawiliwili (6)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Landed Visa (2), Gondor (7), Reporter (12), Showtime Lady (8), Paminsanminsan (4)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Si Isidro Ko (1), Look Of Love (3), Strong Will (6), Dancing Slew (10), Project Six/Kiwi Rose (11), Coolmore/Mapungay (2)

Padyak Pinoy pedals off tomorrow

By Musong R. Castillo

THERE WILL BE SEVERAL BIG GUNS RETURNING when the 2007 Padyak Pinoy pedals off tomorrow, making the 10-stage race more wide open.

Santy Barnachea will be aiming to repeat, but he will have his hands full as the likes of Merculio Ramos, Lloyd Reynante, Joel Calderon and Victor Espiritu return to the fold.

Frederick Feliciano, who figured prominently in the individual race last year, echoed this view, saying that anyone worth his salt has a chance.

"It's hard to predict who has an edge, because I really think everyone in the field has a decent chance," Feliciano told the INQUIRER in Filipino yesterday when he came to the PSA Forum still in his practice jersey.

"Breaks will also help determine the outcome," he said.

The Padyak Pinoy, presented by Tanduay, Wow Magic Sing and Air21, will be longer this year, with a total of nearly 1,500 kilometers of mostly uphill terrain needed to be conquered.

That's why mountain-climbing skills will be a premium, with the race most likely to be decided in the Baguio-to-Baguio grind on May 25.

"This year's tour will be longer, but no one can take it easy, even in the early stages," Paquito Rivas, the chair of the organizing committee and former King of the Mountain, said in Filipino.

A total of 96 riders will answer the starting gun tomorrow in the 3.2-kilometer prologue around the Mall of Asia along Diosdado Macapagal Avenue.

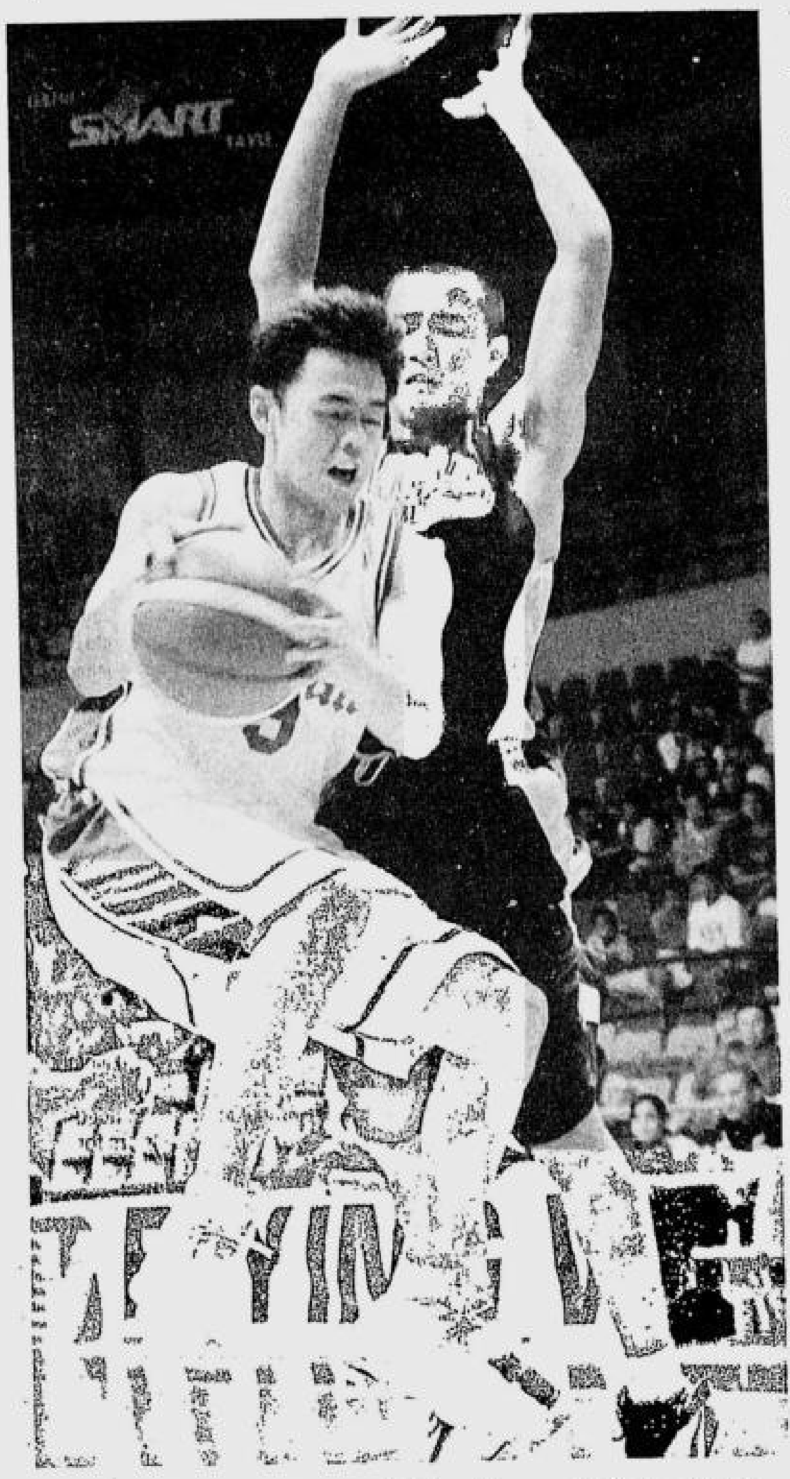
The prologue is an Individual Time Trial-style race where cyclists will be flagged off at one-minute intervals and their times reflecting in the overall individual and team races.

There will also be a total of P2.7 million in prize money, with the individual champion pocketing P50,000 and the winning team P500,000.

LARRY LI (center), Tanduay's advertising manager, heads yesterday's launch of the 2007 Padyak Pinoy. With him are Jim Sarmiento of Champion Authentic Athletic Sportswear; Emma Arceo of Air21; Daniel del Rosario of Wow Magic Sing; Amen Say of Bacchus Energy Drink; PNCA president Paquito Rivas, Gary Cayton of Dynamic Outsource Solutions Inc.; Vellum coach Cesar Lobramonte and cyclists Renato Sambrano and Frederick Feliciano.

THE STAGES

May 17—Prologue-SM Mall of Asia Individual Time Trial 3.2 km
May 18—Quezon City to Cabanatuan City, Massed Start 190.7 km
May 19—Cabanatuan City to Alaminos, Pangasinan, Massed Start, 166 km
May 20—Alaminos, Pangasinan, to Vigan City, Massed Start 267 km
May 21—Vigan City to Laoag City, team time trial 83 km
May 22—Rest Day
May 23—Laoag City to San Fernando, La Union, Massed Start 213 km
May 24—San Fernando City to Baguio City, Massed Start 80 km
May 25—Baguio City to Baguio City, Massed Start 195 km
May 26—Baguio City to Clark Development Corp., Massed Start 195 km
May 27—Rajah Sulayman Manila Criterium Race 90 km



LA SALLE'S Pocholo Villanueva (left) and Raycon Kabigting of JRU dispute the rebound in their game Sunday. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Lady Falcons post 5th win in Nike meet

ADAMSON UNIVERSITY CLAIMED ITS fifth victim yesterday, thrashing La Consolacion College, 88-30, to keep the Group A top spot in the 2007 Nike Summer League basketball tournament at the FEU gym in Manila.

Runners-up to the University of Sto. Tomas Tigers last season, the Lady Falcons relied on Cherrylou Salvana and Ghine Buendia, who scored 12 and points, respectively.

Kat Sandel supported the duo with 10 markers.

April Rose Tan paced the losing squad with 10 points.

LCC fell to its second straight loss following a 58-53 defeat at the hands of National University on Sunday.

In the other women's encounter, Philippine Maritime Institute dumped San Beda College-Alabang, 77-48, to up its record to 3-5.

Janice de Guzman fired 14 points for the the Lady Admirals and was backed by Ruby Ann Abad and Jacquelyn Suarez who chipped in 10 markers each.

The win was a fitting follow-up to PMI's 67-53 victory over College of St. Benilde on Sunday.

SBCA, which also absorbed a 57-44 beating from Centro Escolar University late Sunday, was led by Heidi Jamora who scored 10 points.

Angelica Leano and Joi Tolentino led the CEU Lady Scorpions during that win, scoring 16 and 11 points, respectively. Inquirer Sports Staff

Butch wants to seek Luli's help for SEAG fundraising campaign

By June Navarro

LULI ARROYO

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION may have to turn to Evangeline Lourdes "Luli" Arroyo, the President's only daughter, if it wants to give Olympic-bound athletes quality training for the 2008 Beijing meet.

PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez said seeking the assistance of the low-profile First Daughter is one of the agency's options, as his father Jose Miguel, can't fulfill his promise to help the national athletes following an open-heart surgery last April 10.

"We should explore other options because we couldn't rely solely on one idea," said Ramirez on the PSC's plan to seek the younger Arroyo's help in enticing private sponsors.

Another option is to secure the endorsement of the President's husband once the PSC knocks on the doors of the private sector.

Ramirez said he would have to know first if Mr. Arroyo's health will allow the PSC to work on its plans.

"Without his (Mr Arroyo) signal, I will not cross the bridge," Ramirez told the INQUIRER.

"It will be difficult without his (Arroyo) backing. If his health will not permit it, we will just seek his endorsement," he added.

Ramirez said he would decide on what move to make beginning next week but would try to seek an audience with Mr. Arroyo starting Friday.

Originally scheduied last March, the fundraising campaign usually begins by enticing some of the top corporations in the country to a pledging session sponsored by Mr. Arroyo.

Based on an earlier agreement, Mr. Arroyo committed to help the PSC right after the elections to lure private sponsors to bankroll the Olympic program veered toward capturing the first-ever gold medal of the country.

Kiamco shocks US champion

FILIPINO ACE WARREN KIAMCO stunned reigning US Open champion John Schmidt, 11-7, to strengthen his title bid in the 2007 Enjoypool.com (formerly Billiard Congress of America) 9-ball Championships yesterday at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The 36-year-old Kiamco, who beat Brady Golan of Canada, 11-5, in the opening round will face Japanese Satoshi Kawabata, winner over local ace Steve Lillis, 11-8, and Mat Krah, 11-4, respectively.

Kiamco, the pride of Pasil, Cebu, who's with Bugsy Promotion, won the US Bar Table Championships early this year. He swept the 9-ball and 8-ball competition.

"I'm feeling well this year," said Kiamco, who was confined at the Makati Medical Center twice last year because of ulcer.

Other Filipino campaigners who passed their initial assignments include former world No. 1 Francisco "Django" Bustamante, 2006 World Pool League winner Dennis Orcollo, Jose "Amang" Parica, Marlon Manalo and Santos Sambajon.

The 44-year-old Bustamante bested Jeremy Jones, 11-7, to forge a meeting with Manalo in the next round. Manalo routed 2005 World Junior runner-up Hisashi Kusano of Japan, 11-2. The 28-year-old Orcollo, another Bugsy stalwart, defeated David Reljic of Australia, 11-5, to arrange a showdown with Marcus Chamat of Sweden. Chamat beat Austin Murphy, 11-9, of the US.

Parica edged Allen Hopkins of the United States, 11-9, and will slug it out with former US Open champion Corey Deuel, who whipped Mike Vidas, 11-5. Sambajon bested Bruce Wilkinson, 11-3. Deuel will test the mettle of ex-world 9-ball king Ralf Souquet of Germany, who trashed Max Eberle of the US, 11-4. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

KIAMCO: Feeling well

Baracael, Ekwe pace MVP race

A SWING MAN FROM FAR EASTern University and San Beda's tower of power are leading the race for Most Valuable Player (MVP) honors of the FilOil-Flying V Pre-Season Invitational Cup which resumes on Friday at The Arena in San Juan.

With seven playing days left before the quarterfinals begin June 4, FEU Tamaraw Marnel Baracael paces San Beda Red Lion Samuel Ekwe.

In two games, Baracael is averaging 21 points, 7.5 rebounds, three assists and two steals per game for a total of 62.5 statistical points (SPs), while the 6-foot-8 Ekwe remains as the event's rebound king with a 16.4 average on top his 14.2 points per game (ppg) and 1.8 steals per game (spg).

At third place was Jay Jahnke of National University. The Bulldog's shooting guard has 54 SPs and is tops in the assist and steals departments with six feeds and 4.3 snatches a game.

Jonathan Fernandez, also of NU, is the Bulldog's top scorer with 21 per outing and is running fourth with 48.5 SPs.

Rounding out the first five spots was De La Salle University's team captain Tyrone Tang with 48.3 SPs. The veteran point guard has put up impressive numbers—17.3 ppg, 5.3 rpg, 4.3 apg and 1.6 spg.

San Beda's Pong Escobal (47.2 SPs), UST's Darryl Basa (47), UE's Narciso Llagas (47), Ateneo's Jobe Nkomakolem (46.2) and UP's Veejay Serios (45.5) complete the top 10 places.

SMB Group Brand manager Jessica Marie Catral presents the championship trophy to the members of the NCR team. The team coached by Shiela Tabangcora defeated San Carlos, 3-1, in the finals as Richelle de los Reyes was adjudged Most Valuable Player.

West Negros, Manila booters rule SMB tilt

WEST NEGROS AND NATIONAL Capital Region teams won over tough opponents to rule the San Miguel Beer (SMB) Sarap Mag Babad Beach Football tournament held recently at the Station 3 in Boracay Island.

The WN team coached by Norman Fegidero turned back Army, 3-2, while the NCR squad mentored by Shiela Tabangcora beat San Carlos, 3-1, in the third and final leg of the tilt organized by the Beach Football Association of the Philippines.

Robert Canedo of WN and Richelle de los Reyes were adjudged the Most Valuable Players (MVPs) in their respective divisions.

"We're happy that players and beach promenaders enjoyed the action," said SMB Group Brand manager Jessica Marie Catral.

Before beating Army, WN outshine the field that included Bacolod United, Cravings and local team Cocomangas while NCR bested Central Philippine University, San Carlos B and the Rising Stars of Boracay before nipping San Carlos in the finals.

Jr. NBA tips off today

THE JR. NBA TOURNAMENT tips off at the Don Bosco Technical Institute Makati today with 16 teams competing. At The inaugural Jr. NBA Tournament champion will get the chance to participate in the Jr. NBA Training Camp scheduled for June 4 to 6.

The teams are composed of students from each of the 16 participating Metro Manila schools of the Jr. NBA Philippines School Clinics, held from April 2 to May 8.

At the Jr. NBA School Clinics, a 2-hour Jr. NBA session was conducted for 50 kids in each participating school. Each session was comprised of basketball clinics, drills, scrimmages, and talks on the values of sportsmanship, teamwork, positive attitude and respect.

The 16 teams will be divided into Eastern and Western Conferences. The eight teams in each conference will then be divided into two divisions with four teams each. The four divisions are: Eastern Conference—Atlantic Division and Southeast Division; Western Conference—Pacific Division and Midwest Division. Four rounds will be played to determine the Jr. NBA Tournament Champion. The Jr. NBA Final between the Champions of the Eastern and Western Conferences will take place Friday at 4:30 p.m.

Tiu eyes another record-breaking feat

TOP DRIVERS AIM TO BOLSTER their title bids as the 2007 San Mig Coffee Drag Racing Championship resumes with its fourth leg on Saturday at the Batangas Racing Circuit Drag Strip in Rosario.

Pacesetting Jonathan Tiu of Team Ere tries to bounce back, looking forward to another record-breaking feat in the premier Quick 8 division of this event.

In the last leg, Tiu got booted out early due to a loose gasoline hose, paving the way for chief tuner Mato Tan to grab the spotlight aboard his DGL Motorsports Honda Chop Top.

Tan and second leg winner Vanni Garcia of W. Autosport Vannitec are in second place with 15 points apiece, just 10 points behind Tiu.

Sharing the lead with Tiu for the coveted Drag Racing Driver of the Year award is the comeback-ing Sonny de Torres of Group N-Matonetics who's also eyeing his second straight win in the Pro class.

De Torres upstaged Blanche Racing's Jon Sarmiento in the last leg to garner a total of 25 points, just a 10-point margin over Roy Peter Concepcion of Orthodox Racing and lady driver When When Dagondon of W. Autosport Vannitec.

Federer decides to go solo

HAMBURG, GERMANY—ROGER FEDerer will play the French Open and Wimbledon without a coach after splitting with Tony Roche, the world number one said on Monday.

Federer, who had worked with the 61-year-old Australian on a part-time basis since 2005, blamed communication problems for the parting of ways, which he announced on Saturday after a run of four tournaments without a title.

"It wasn't an easy decision," Federer told reporters at the Hamburg Masters, where he is the top seed.

"He's helped me a lot but in the end he was a part-time coach. We were together only 15 weeks a year and I just thought the communication wasn't going very far any more."

Federer, who said he had been thinking about a change for some time, added that he had the experience to go into the next two grand slam tournaments without help.

"I'm not going to take a coach because I know what it takes to win," he said. "I don't want anyone interfering with my preparation."

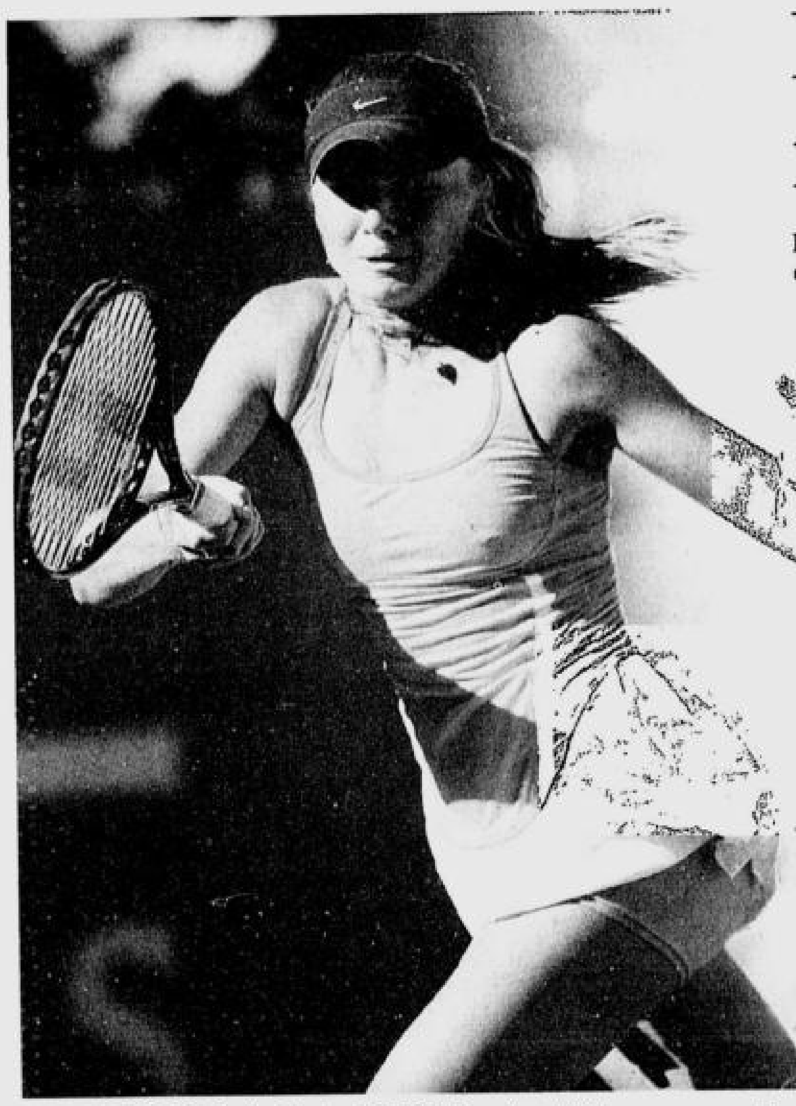
FEDERER AP

Federer won six of his 10 grand slams while working with Roche, who had previously coached Ivan Lendl and Pat Rafter.

But the 25-year-old has had success on his own, too. He won his first grand slam at Wimbledon in 2003 with Peter Lundgren but let the Swede go less than six months later. He then went on to lift three more majors in 2004 after opting to go it alone.

Federer, who has never won the French Open, needs to take the Roland Garros title to become only the third man after American Don Budge and Australian Rod Laver to hold all four majors at the same time.

Spain's Rafael Nadal, the second seed in Hamburg, has won the French Open for the last two years and is on a 77-match winning streak on clay. *AP*


HANTUCHOVA: In the first set, I think I was too tight. AP

Hantuchova marches on

ROME—NINTH-SEEDED DANIELA HANTUchova rallied to beat French qualifier Aravane Rezai, 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, Monday in the first round of the Italian Open.

"In the first set I think I was tight, but that's normal in the first round," said Hantuchova, who has never advanced past the third round in six previous appearances in Rome.

Other seeds advancing were No. 11 Shahar Peer of Israel, who was leading, 6-0, 2-0, when Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska retired due to an injury to her right wrist, and 10th-seeded Elena Dementieva of Russia, who dispatched Italy's Maria Elena Camerin, 6-1, 6-2.

Also, Ai Sugiyama beat Maria Kirilenko, 6-4, 5-7, 7-5; Meghann Shaughnessy of the United States eliminated Emilie Loit, 6-3, 6-2; Ukraine's Alona Bondarenko outlasted Chinese Sun Tiantian, 6-7 (6) 7-5, 6-2; and lucky loser Michaella Krajicek defeated Olga Poutchkova, 6-1, 6-2.

In a matchup of the youngest and oldest players in the draw, 16-year-old Austrian qualifier Tamira Paszek rallied past 34-year-old Nicole Pratt, 6-7 (1), 6-0, 6-2.

The top eight seeded players have byes in the first round. Two-time Rome champion Amelie Mauresmo is the top seed. *AP*

Landis hearing gets under way

MALIBU, CALIFORNIA—ARLENE LANDIS took out her camera to snap a picture of her son sitting next to his lawyers in the courtroom.

Surely, photos of the arbitration hearing that began Monday won't go in the front of Floyd Landis' scrapbook of Tour de France highlights. Still, the moment was something to remember.

Accused of using banned synthetic testosterone during his win last year, Landis could be suspended for two years, which would make him the first cyclist in the 104-year history of the Tour de France to be stripped of his title.

After months of explaining himself to anyone who would listen, Landis finally got to have his case heard by the arbitrators who will decide his fate.

LANDIS AP

"I'm looking forward to it," he said before the hearing, wearing a yellow necktie that matched the color of the famed jersey he captured last year in Paris. "I'm looking forward to there being an end, so I'll know whether I can keep riding or not."

What promises to be nine days of mostly dry scientific evidence began with some good theater.

"Make no mistake about it," Landis attorney Maurice Suh said in his opening statement, "this case is an utter disaster."

The disaster, Suh said, is the way the US Anti-Doping Agency has gone about prosecuting the case.

Richard Young, the lead attorney presenting USADA's case, said in his opening statement that despite the publicity, this was simply another in a long list of cases USADA handles—one in which the cold, hard scientific data would prove an athlete had used synthetic testosterone.

"There's nothing unique about what the panel has to decide," Young said. "It's one of dozens of cases in which a high testosterone-to-epitestosterone ratio is confirmed by" a different, more sensitive test.

Suh, however, said it was more than just another case.

"It's a historic case, and it needs to be done right," he said.

Landis insisted on turning his arbitration hearing into a public process, in part to expose what he says is the fraudulent way USADA and its partners in the industry do business.

Landis generated lots of support and raised about $750,000 through the Floyd Fairness Fund, though that public support did not translate into attendance at the hearing. *AP*

Japanese star proves worth

BOSTON—DAISUKE MATSUZAKA TOSSED A six-hitter in his first Major League complete game as the Boston Red Sox overpowered the Detroit Tigers, 7-1, on Monday.

The high-priced Japanese pitcher struck out five and walked none in improving his record to 5-2.

"As for throwing a complete game, I'm not that thrilled about that in and of itself," Matsuzaka told reporters through an interpreter.

"But the fact I was able to pitch my first really good game, my first really good showing at Fenway, that I'm really excited about," he added.

Matsuzaka did not allow a runner past second base after giving up a third-inning homer to the Tigers's Curtis Granderson.

"I think it was good that I was able to give our batting lineup a chance to stay in rhythm by keeping my innings short," Matsuzaka said. "I was conscious of throwing strikes and I felt like I pitched at a good tempo today."

The home crowd greeted him with cheers when he came out to pitch the ninth.

"That definitely pumped me up," Matsuzaka said.

Although he threw 124 pitches, his Major League high so far, manager Terry Francona said, "I didn't see a reason to take him out. He never came out of his delivery. He was better at the end than he was at the beginning." *Reuters*

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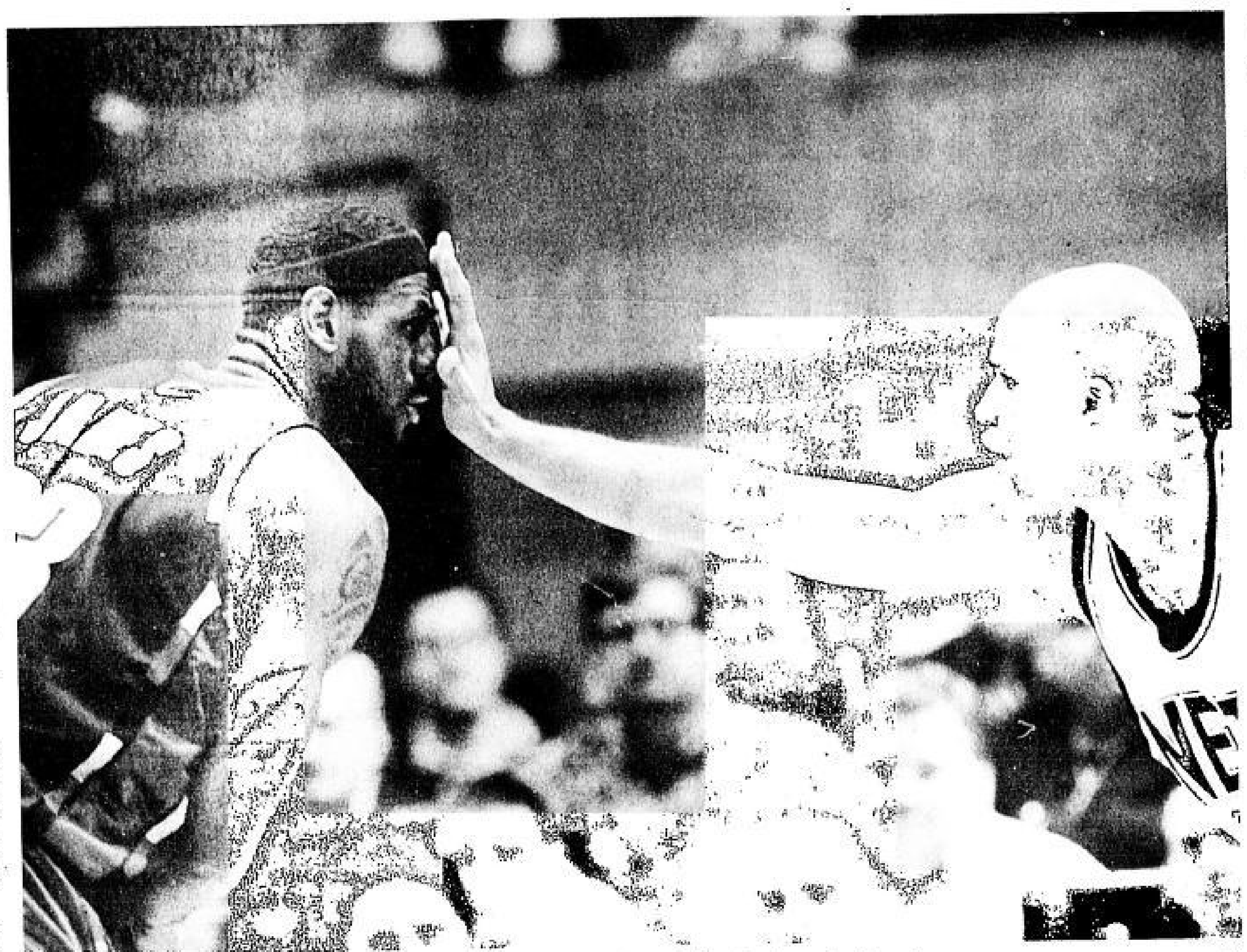
Hard fouls add drama to big wins

Cavs trip Nets, near East finals



NEW JERSEY swingman Richard Jefferson tries to block the view of Cleveland star LeBron James. AP

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey—Star forward LeBron James drew inspiration from a hard foul on a teammate to rally the Cavaliers past the New Jersey Nets on Monday, a win that put Cleveland on the brink of a conference finals berth.

The Nets held a four-point lead in the third quarter and were on their way to sending the best-of-seven series back to Cleveland tied at 2-2, when New Jersey forward Mikki Moore barged into the path of fast-breaking Cavs guard Sasha Pavlovic.

The Cavaliers, especially James, took the bone-jarring collision as a slap to the face and retaliated with an 11-point run that transformed a 53-49 deficit into a 60-53 lead.

Playing a ferocious defense that shut down New Jersey's free-flowing attack, the Cavs went on to post an 87-85 victory for a 3-1 series lead in the Eastern Conference semifinal.

"It's all about protecting your team mates," James told reporters after leading the Cavs with 30 points, eight of them coming during the third-quarter run.

"And me being a leader on this team, I can't let anyone on the opposing team try to intimidate any of my teammates."

The muscular James gave Moore a piece of his mind on the court and made his feelings known to the referees, before going to work with the basketball.

"It definitely fired me up as an individual, but I had to make sure everyone else was calm," the 22-year-old added.

"I wanted to make a statement and I was able to do that."

Cleveland coach Mike Browns said the foul on Pavlovic was a galvanizing moment in a defensive commitment that saw the Cavs limit New Jersey to just four fast break points.

"The one thing they did in (winning) Game Three, they came out and were very physical with us and we didn't match their physicality," Brown said.

"Tonight, I think we did a better job of it. Our guys get fired up by that type of stuff, especially a guy like LeBron."

Cavs guard Larry Hughes, who helped make a game-saving defensive stop against New Jersey's Vince Carter with 1.9 seconds left, also cited the Pavlovic foul as a turning point.

"This is definitely fun," Hughes said. "When the pressure's on and everybody is real intense and fouls are being made and everybody is screaming at the refs. That is a fun way to play basketball." *Reuters*

Suns, Nash fight back, down Spurs

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS—AMARE STOUDEMIRE scored 26 points and Steve Nash collected 24 points and 15 assists as Phoenix escaped with a 104-98 win over San Antonio, tying their Western Conference semifinal series at two games apiece.

Shawn Marion had 12 points and 12 rebounds for the Suns, who outscored the Spurs, 32-18, in the final period, including an 8-0 run to take their first lead of the second half.

"We stuck with it," Nash said. "We could have folded but we hung in there and scrapped a few plays, "We have got a long way to go. After it is all said and done maybe we can look back at this. But we have so many moments left to go."

Dormant for most of Monday's contest, Phoenix' offense kicked into high gear when it mattered most.

Trailing, 97-92, with 2:13 left, the Suns reeled off four straight quality possessions—capped by Stoudemire's defiant drive to make it 100-97 with 33 seconds left.

But in a series on the verge of spiraling out of control thanks to a pair of ugly injuries, tensions continued to ride high as a result of some perceived dirty play. On Monday, Horry continued the chippy play.

Seeing stars

As the Suns were about to secure the victory down the stretch, the veteran forward shoulder-checked the much smaller Nash into the scorer's table with 18.2 seconds left, sending him careening to the floor.

"I was seeing stars from the check," said Nash, who got up and shoved Horry before being restrained. "Good one. He just body checked me out of bounds. He's frustrated and it happens. I am sorry it happened to him. He did body check me."

Asked if he considered landing a few haymakers on Horry's mug, the Canadian Nash said, "I have been working on my guns a bit. So a couple of combos might have landed some points to the body."

Phoenix coach Mike D'Antoni flew to Nash's side and Suns guard Raja Bell was elbowed in the head by Horry, nearly sparking a bigger fight before the referees cooled tempers.

Stoudemire and Suns forward Boris Diaw took a few steps on the court from the bench before being held back by assistant coach Mark Iavaroni, leaving open the possibility the two key performers could be suspended for the pivotal game five.

Stoudemire defended his decision to go onto the court: "I was definitely going to check in (to the game) on the foul. I was coming up on it. Then it all happened."

Battle scar

It certainly was not the first sign of rising tensions between the two squads in this best-of-seven matchup.

San Antonio's Manu Ginobili was the second player to suffer a battle scar in game three.

The swingman was scraped just beneath his right eye in Saturday's 108-101 victory, leaving him with a nasty bruise.

It marked yet another gruesome injury in this series. Nash suffered a deep cut to his nose in game one.

The two-time MVP's nose bled profusely in the latter stages of the contest, forcing the Suns to keep him off the floor.

The bruises have not just been on the court. After game two, Stoudemire accused Spurs defensive specialist Bruce Bowen of being a dirty player, causing the Spurs and Stoudemire to trade barbs following the contest.

However, the All-Star forward did his talking on the court this time around, shooting nine-of-18 from the floor and eight-of-eight from the line.

Nash was eight-of-12, including two-of-three from the arc for Phoenix, which won for just the second time in its last 13 games in San Antonio.

Suns coach D'Antoni was pleased with the team's finish, especially the 16-3 run to the end the contest. *AFP*

Raptors team architect named NBA's top exec

NEW YORK—BRYAN COLANGELO, THE Toronto Raptors' president and general manager, was chosen as the NBA's executive of the year for the second time on Monday.

Colangelo received 20 votes to nine for Houston Rockets general manager Carroll Dawson, who finished second in the voting of 45 league executives.

Colangelo also won the award in 2004-05 with the Phoenix Suns, and his father, Jerry, won the award four times.

After 15 years with the Suns, Colangelo joined the Raptors in February 2006 and began overhauling the roster of a franchise that won only 27 games the previous season and missed the playoffs for the fourth straight time.

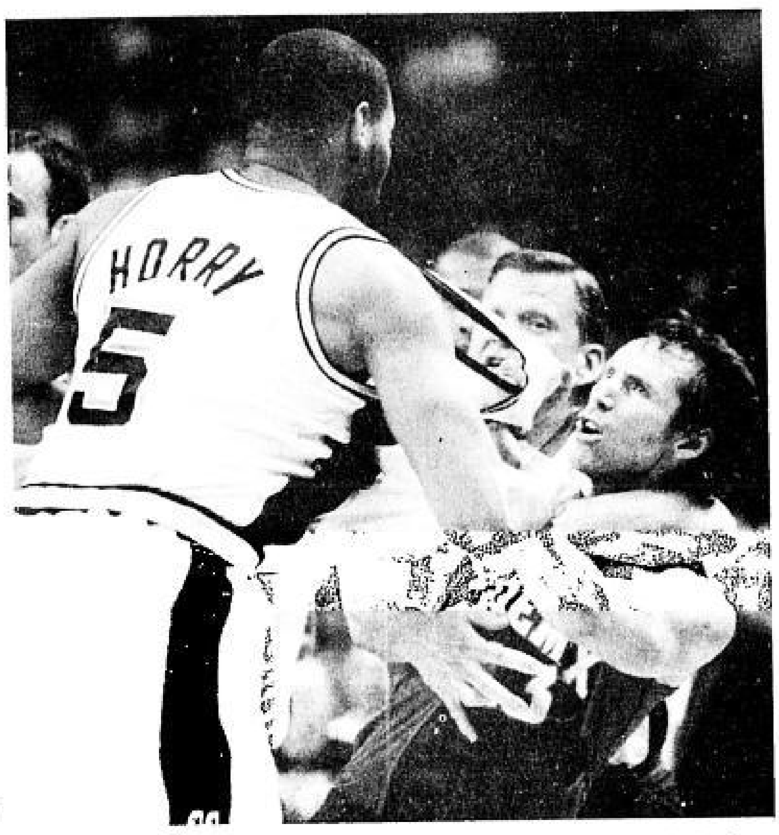
Building around forward Chris Bosh, Colangelo added Andrea Bargnani of Italy with the first pick in the 2006 draft and signed Anthony Parker and forward Jorge Garbajosa of Spain. Colangelo also swung trades for guard TJ Ford, Slovenian center Rasho Nesterovic and forward Kris Humphries.

The revamped roster tied a franchise record with 47 wins and captured its first Atlantic Division title before losing to the New Jersey Nets in the first round of the playoffs.

"This award is somewhat bittersweet given that we're not playing right now," Colangelo said. "We've got changes to make. We want to make the roster better and we want to compete in the East for years to come.

"The fact of the matter is there's a lot of work to do," he added. "We find ourselves division champions and that's probably a surprise to everyone, but that's not good enough. We want to get to the point where we can advance in the playoffs and build things."

The award, presented by The Sporting News, comes after Sam Mitchell was honored as coach of the year last month. *AP*



STEVE Nash angrily confronts Robert Horry after the latter's foul. AP

Dirk gets MVP trophy despite early playoff exit

NEW YORK—THE NATIONAL BASKETBALL Association will name its Most Valuable Player (MVP) here on Tuesday with several reports declaring German star Dirk Nowitzki will receive the honor despite an early playoff exit.

The Dallas Mavericks star forward will become the first European-born player to win the award but would also become the first MVP whose team was ousted in the first round of the playoffs since Houston's Moses Malone in 1982.

The Mavericks, whose 67-15 record was the NBA's best in the regular season, were eliminated by bottom-seed Golden State in a stunning first-round Western Conference upset.

Canada's Steve Nash, a former Dallas teammate of Nowitzki, has won the MVP award the past two seasons.

Media voting is conducted following the season, just before the Mavericks' playoff collapse. Much of the blame for the failure falls upon Nowitzki, who averaged only 19.7 points on 38 percent shooting against Golden State.

During his ninth NBA season, Nowitzki averaged 24.6 points, 8.9 rebounds and a career-high 3.4 assists. Nowitzki finished 10th in scoring, 12th in rebounding, 13th in field-goal percentage and second in free-throw percentage.

He was the only NBA player to shoot at least 50 percent from the field (.502), 40 percent from beyond the 3-point arc (.416) and 90 percent from the free-throw line (.904).

If Nowitzki is indeed named the MVP, he will join Nash, Tim Duncan of the Virgin Islands and Nigerian-born Hakeem Olajuwon as the only non-US-born players to take the award. *AFP*

NOWITZKI: Highs and lows. AP

Chelsea's grand football dreams reduced to two-title chase

CHELSEA'S Didier Drogba (left) and skipper John Terry have "just" a golden double to look forward to. REUTERS

LONDON—JOSE MOURINHO'S CHELSEA have had a bumpy ride this season, buffeted by power struggles at the club and injuries on the pitch.

While Alex Ferguson can enjoy the FA Cup final as secure in his job as at any time during his 20-year tenure at Manchester United, a question mark still hangs over Mourinho's future.

Until this month Chelsea was within grasp of an unprecedented quartet of trophies.

But a limping exit during the Champions League semifinal at Liverpool and the surrender of the Premier League to Manchester United after a tired series of draws means the most Chelsea can win is a League and FA Cup double.

Until Roman Abramovich bought the ailing club in 2003, a cup double would have provoked wild celebration in south west London, where fans were used to supporting a fashionable side of serial underachievement.

But the Russian billionaire, who has spent more than 500 million pounds ($990 million) on the club in the last four years, has ambitions to make Chelsea the top side in the world.

Mourinho, hired in 2004 as a Champions League winner with Porto, has served up two Premier League titles and two League Cups, but this season seems like something of a failure.

"I'm happy we are not happy," Mourinho said of the season's disappointments after the last Premier League game on Sunday, a 1-1 draw with Everton. "It shows our nature."

Chelsea was laid low by a series of long-term injuries halfway through the season.

Czech Republic keeper Petr Cech fractured his skull and was out for three months. Midfielder Joe Cole spent most of the season nursing knee and foot injuries and his England teammate and inspirational captain John Terry missed two months with a back problem.

When Mourinho asked for money for players to cover injuries in the new year transfer window, Abramovich withdrew his wallet, however, believing the coach, so outspoken and confident in his own abilities, should be able to manage with the rest of his highly paid squad.

Mourinho was struggling with some of his players, however.

Ukraine striker Andriy Shevchenko and his fellow high profile 2006 signing Michael Ballack failed to live up to expectations, except in Cup games.

While they often looked off-pace in the Premier League their goals—a Shevchenko screamer in the sixth round replay against Tottenham Hotspur and an extra-time strike by Michael Ballack in the semifinal against Blackburn Rovers—proved crucial to Chelsea's FA Cup run.

RP divers stand to lose 3 golds; rowers hurting

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FILIPINO DIVERS ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING three gold medals even before they get the chance to defend them in the Thailand Southeast Asian Games in December.

The Thailand SEA Games organizing committee yesterday threatened to shut down yet another of the Philippines' SEAG gold mines after it decided to drop four events in diving—three of which were ruled by Filipinos in competitions held two years ago in Los Baños, Laguna.

"They maybe trying to use it as a trading card for events they really want to pull out," said aquatics chief Mark Joseph, who is also the Philippines' top SEAG Task Force official.

Joseph expressed optimism that the SEAG organizers will eventually hold competitions in the men's and women's 3-meter synchronized springboard events because these are on the Olympic roster.

The Zardo Domenios-Nino Carog and Sheila Mae Perez-Ceseil Domenios combine topped the events in the 2005 Games.

But Joseph could not say much about the country's chances in the men's and women's 1-meter individual springboard. Perez also ruled the women's event the last time up.

Filipino dragonboat racers, who swept the six gold medals at stake in the 2005 SEAG, are also making an appeal to include the 1,000m 10-a-side event after the events were cut down to just two this year.

PEREZ (right), with SEAG teammate Ceseil Domeños, is in danger of failing to defend two gold medals she won in 2005. INQUIRER PHOTO

"They see a hope in dragonboat because it will be held in Pattaya, which means the venue is big enough to have longer events," Joseph said.

He said the Philippines will try to convince the SEAG Federation to consider the 10-a-side 1,000m and 250m events.

Top Philippine Olympic Committee officials are expected to attend the SEAG Federation meeting in Nakhon Rachisima, Thailand, on June 2-4 to finalize the list of events for the December Games.

Dragonboat and diving are just two of the sports affected by Thailand's decision to slash several events in favor of new sports disciplines.

Joseph said Thailand is trying to include Thai chess in the calendar.

In the 2003 SEAG, host Vietnam included the hitherto unheard-of sport of fin swimming among the list of events to boost its gold medal chances.

FROM SIX TO TWO: RP dragon boat racers show their might during the 2005 SEAG at La Mesa Dam.

All-female tourney pits future stars of taekwondo

AROUND 700 TAEKWONDO PRACTICIONERS are expected to see action in the 2007 Petron/Smart All-Women's Taekwondo Championships on Sunday, May 20 at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

According to Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado, the country's best and up-and-coming athletes will display their prowess.

"Only the members of the national team who will be competing in the world championships in Beijing, China, will not be able to participate," said Aventajado. "But the other members of the national pool will strut their stuff."

All affiliated PTA chapters and branches throughout Metro Manila and the provinces, including the different military commands, will be represented in the event which starts at 9 a.m.

Organizing committee chair Sun Chong Hong says competition will be conducted in four categories, namely, senior women, junior women, mid-junior women and grade school girls.

The event is part of the association's commitment and endeavor to help develop sports in the tournament, more particularly the country's grassroots program.

The tourney is supported by Smart Communication, Petron, PLDT, Philippine Sports Commission, Accel and Milo.

10K run marks Masters revival

A THREE-IN-ONE 10K RUN INSIDE THE Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa on May 27 will usher in the revival of the Masters' movement in all sports in the country.

Organized by the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (Trap) in cooperation with Manny Ibay from the Philippine Sports Commission and the Ayala Alabang Village Running Club headed by Patrick Joson, the event is expected to attract some 200 entries.

"Our objective is to eventually organized different Masters' events in different disciplines and revive the Masters' movement in sports under the auspices of the World Masters' movement," said Trap president Tom Carrasco.

Aside from the Masters' Run, Trap is also holding an Executive Run and a Corporate Team race.

For the Masters' Run, entries have to be at least 40 years of age in the men's side and 35 for the women's division. For the Executive Run, it will only be open to senior managers and top corporate executives, professionals, and businessmen with certified annual salaries of at least P1 million, regardless of age.

Entry forms are available at the TRAP office at the PhilSports Complex, Pasig City and at the Ayala Alabang Village Association office every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Forms can also be downloaded from www.triathlon.org.ph.

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Markets cheer peaceful conduct of polls

Peso breaks into 46:$1, stocks hit 10-year high

By Doris C. Dumlao and Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE PESO YESTERDAY BROKE INTO THE 46 LEVEL AGAINST the dollar for the first time in six years as financial markets cheered the peaceful conduct of Monday's mid-term national elections.

Stocks surged to a fresh 10-year high yesterday, catching up with similar rallies in the region, with the key PSEi index gaining 1.3 percent to 3,408.73, the highest since the 3,447.6 posted on Feb. 3, 1997.

Currency traders said the seasonal influx of overseas remittances ahead of next month's school opening also provided a strong boost to the local currency, which hit an intra-day high of 46.95 in morning trade before closing at 47.06:$1 yesterday. Volume turnover at the spot foreign exchange market Philippine Dealing System amounted to $608.7 million.

A currency trader said the peso would have rallied further were it not for the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' buying of dollars at the local currency's intra-day highs.

The peso, which is now trading at its strongest since hitting 46:$1 on Jan. 22, 2001, gained another 11.5 centavos from Friday's finish of 47.175 against the greenback.

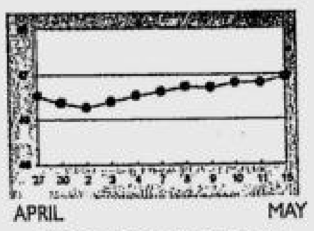
Financial markets reopened yesterday after the May 14 polls for 275 representatives in Congress, a dozen seats in the Senate and about 18,000 posts in local government units.

"It's because of the start of the remittance

MARKETS/ B6

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



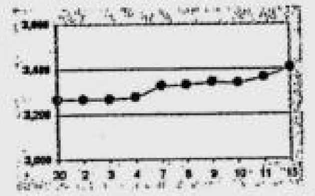
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 47.06 = $ 1

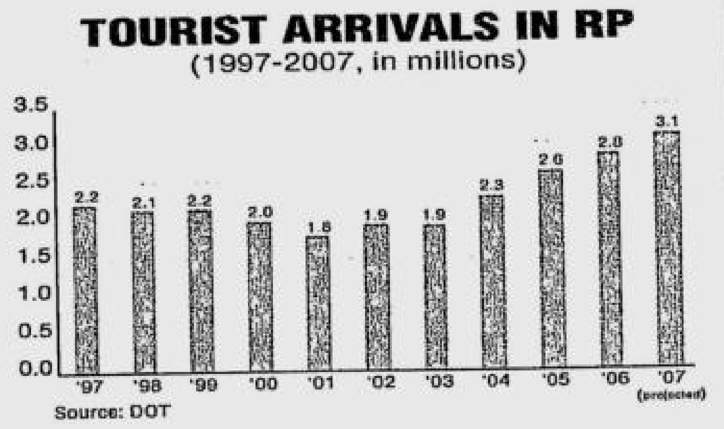
As of 5 p.m., May 15, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)



Source: DOT

Tourism advocates push for open skies

By Daxim L. Lucas

(Second of three parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

JOSE C. CLEMENTE III BElieves that there are far more foreign tourists interested in visiting the country than the two million arrivals recorded each year.

As the general manager of Rajah Tours Philippines Inc., one of the country's biggest travel agents, he sees that demand for the country's tourist destinations outstrips supply by a significant margin.

Clemente, who also heads the Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA), is quick to reply when asked what kind of supply the local tourism industry lacks: "Rooms and [airline] seats."

TOURISM/ B7

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Gov't to review draft IRR of e-commerce law /B7

New data indicate more oil off Palawan /B3

Pirates ravage IT trade /B10

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Gov't moves closer to selling San Miguel stake

Compromise with all claiming parties eyed

THE GOVERNMENT MOVED A STEP closer to selling its 24-percent stake in food and drinks giant San Miguel Corp. on Tuesday after an anti-graft court confirmed the $1.2 billion holding belonged to the state.

The government has fought for the shares in Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage group for over 20 years. It aims to sell them as early as July and use the proceeds to help reduce its budget deficit and fund the agriculture sector.

Former President Corazon Aquino confiscated the shares from her cousin, current San Miguel chair Eduardo Cojuangco, in 1986 because the funds used to purchase the stock were illegally collected from coconut farmers.

Other parties claiming to own the shares, including coconut farmers' groups and Cojuangco, may still take the case to the Supreme Court. The anti-graft court's ruling, made on May 11, was released only on Tuesday.

The government had said it hoped to enter into a compromise deal with the farmers in which they would drop their claim in exchange for representation in a foundation, which would invest proceeds from the stake sale in the farming sector.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves told Reuters last week the government hoped to get all parties to agree on the compromise deal by the end of the month or by middle of June, with the sale likely to happen a month or two after. The government wants to sell the shares as a block.

Teves declined to comment on the court's decision.

Cojuangco is also claiming a separate 17.4-percent stake in San Miguel, which he said he bought using his own money. But the government alleges the block of shares was part of assets illegally acquired by the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

On Tuesday, San Miguel's B shares, open to all investors, jumped 7.4 percent to P87 ($1.9) as the main index gained 1.31 percent to reach a 10-year high.

Its A shares, restricted to local players, climbed 7.8 percent.

Japan's Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd. owns about 20 percent of San Miguel while SM Investments Corp. holds 10.8 percent.

The Philippines is relying on the sale of its San Miguel stake and a 10-percent holding in Manila Electric Co. to raise P55 billion this year to help reduce its budget deficit, which is expected to reach P63 billion.

But the fiscal shortfall goal is in doubt after the government missed its first quarter deficit target due to poor tax collections and despite a P25-billion windfall from the sale of a minority stake in telecoms giant PLDT.

Reuters

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118i Executive	Titanium Silver	2007	15,000 kms	P1,890,000
118i Executive	Black Sapphire	2007	10,000 kms	P1,890,000
320i Executive (E90)	Titanium Silver	2007	15,024 kms	P2,428,000
320i Executive (E90)	Sparkling Graphite	2007	6,000 kms	P2,500,000
320i LE (E90)	Alpine White	2007	9,186 kms	P2,550,000
320i LE (E90)	Black	2007	10,000 kms	P2,550,000
530d Executive (E60)	Titanium Silver	2007	3,700 kms	P5,016,000
X5 3.0d Limited Edition	Sterling Grey	2006	6,385 kms	P5,330,000

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118i Sport	Titanium Silver	2005	16,000 kms	P1,850,000
120i	Sparkling Graphite	2005	18,300 kms	P1,750,000
316i (E36)	Calypson Red	1996	28,632 kms	P490,000
318i Limousine (E46)	Sienna Red	2001	40,658 kms	P1,100,000
320i Executive (E90)	Titanium Silver	2006	26,000 kms	P2,250,000
325i (E90)	Black Sapphire	2006	6,797 kms	P2,950,000
523i (E39)	Dunkel Blue	1997	82,502 kms	P950,000
X3 2.5i SAV	Mystic Blue	2005	23,824 kms	P2,690,000
X5 3.0d	Pearl Beige	2002	43,050 kms	P2,800,000

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Our glorious democracy

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN HOLDING democratic elections far longer than most countries in the whole world. Our American colonizers thought it would take Filipinos 50 years to learn democracy (I think they just wanted more time to develop our natural resources for their own benefit).

So, the Americans taught us our first lessons in democracy almost from the very start. In 1905, barely seven years after Admiral Dewey sailed into Manila Bay to rout an aging and hopelessly outgunned Spanish fleet, the Philippines held its first elections to choose governors and mayors. Two years later, the first Legislative Assembly was elected.

There were no surveys, poll watchers and quick count. The elections were clean and honest. There was no Comelec. The American government ran the elections.

There were two parties with distinctly different agenda. The Nacionalistas were for independence. The Federalistas were for statehood. This was the only time when the Philippines had a real two-party system.

Manuel Quezon, Sergio Osmeña and Manuel Roxas, the Big Three who were to dominate the political scene for the next 50 years, headed the Nacionalista Party. As a result, this party won 80 percent of the vote in those two elections. But the clamor for independence was much stronger for statehood. Eventually, the Federalistas faded away.

Quezon beat everyone who stood in his way. By 1935, the Nacionalistas held the country under a virtual one-party rule.

Quezon died in exile in Washington in late World War II. Osmeña succeeded him. When Douglas McArthur waded into Tacloban beach in October 1944, Osmeña was at his side. In 1946, the Philippines finally got the independence that the Big Three had long fought for.

Roxas wanted to run for president against Osmeña. But there was only one party, the Nacionalista Party. No problem. Roxas put up the Nacionalista Party, Liberal Wing, which later became simply the Liberal Party. Roxas won, but died of a heart attack at Clark Field midway through his term. Elpidio Quirino ascended to the presidency.

Now, the Nacionalista Party is gone. The Liberal Party is splintered. In place of a two-party system, we have an alphabet soup of parties. One wonders, where in heaven's name are we going? But, an election, just like the one we had last Monday, with all its flaws, proves again what a glorious democracy we have in this country.

The 39 precincts of Bel-Air Makati, where I vote, were all housed in the well-lighted basketball court. The precincts opened promptly at 7 a.m., closed at 3 p.m. The counting was halfway through by 7:30 p.m., when I went home to watch major league baseball on ESPN.

The voting was one big social event. Everyone came: the young and old, rich and the poor, the hale and the infirm, the master and servant, the mistress and maid. Everyone had exactly one vote each. We filled up our ballots on two tables that ran the whole length of the court.

We should be proud that everyone who came could read and write. Not too many countries in the Third World can match that.

The Filipino woman won the right to vote almost three-quarters of a century ago. The Kuwaiti women won her right to suffrage only last year. There are many countries whose women are not yet allowed to vote.

Of course, there are still a lot of things wrong with our democracy. The killings are our national shame. But the killings are mostly to fight for control of jueteng, smuggling and the rackets. As they kill each other, the country might be better off—maybe.

A democracy is like a house that is never finished. It is work in progress. The greatest tragedy is to lose hope. As we deplore the dark side of our democracy, let us count our blessings. And there are a lot of blessings that we should be thankful for. We just are not looking for them in the right places.

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STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Head Office and Branches)
As of March 30, 2007

ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Items		P 2,254,258,447
Due from Bangko Sentral		15,014,533,252
Due from Other Banks		3,301,039,507
Interbank Loans Receivable		13,165,628,794
Trading Account Securities (Net)		61,835,274,968
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		1,122,327,391
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)		30,539,270,940
Equity Investments (Net)		2,262,230,431
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (Net)		1,304,017,795
Other Assets (Net):		
Property Owned/Acquired		1,718,687,243
Others		4,013,283,427
TOTAL ASSETS		P 136,530,552,195
LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits		P 22,251,655,877
Savings Deposits		51,300,456,413
Time Deposits		28,719,607,676
Special/Other Deposits		1,963,348,217
Due to Bangko Sentral		46,981,490
Due to Banks		18,780,685
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		662,881,481
Bills Payable:		
BSP-Rediscounts/Special Programs		156,979,705
Interbank Borrowings		7,162,660,233
Others		1,779,844,922
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		638,453,226
Other Liabilities		6,352,543,020
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (incl. of Unamortized Premium/Discount)		2,996,935,787
TOTAL LIABILITIES		P 124,051,128,732
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		
Capital Stock		P 4,981,626,239
Surplus		5,216,194,650
Surplus Reserves		221,100,000
Other Capital Accounts		2,060,502,574
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		P 12,479,423,463
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		P 136,530,552,195
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit		P 5,488,767,498
Bills for Collection		2,093,756,024
Spot/Future Exchange Bought		34,160,417,259
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		36,951,345,469
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements		9,240,518,267
Invested in:		
Government Securities	P 1,386,278,326	
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stock	774,313,039	
Loans and Discounts	4,328,779,726	
Other Assets	2,751,147,176	
Accountabilities:		
Trust and Other Fiduciary	1,894,452,635	
Investment/Fund Management	4,657,550,032	
Unearned Income and Other Accountabilities	2,688,515,600	
Other Contingent Accounts		3,302,222,355
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		P 91,237,026,872

OTHER INFORMATION:

1. Deposits of:

a) Government	1,892,999,698
b) Banks	8,171,469,271
c) Trust Department	905,540,510

2. Compliance with Magna Carta Law:

	Small Enterprises	Medium Enterprises
Prescribed Ratio of Compliance:	6%	2%
Actual Compliance:	6.67%	10.38%

3. Amount of non-performing loans	P 2,112,683,595
4. Ratio of non-performing loans to total loan portfolio	3.94%
5. Amount of classified loans and other risk assets	9,990,000,000
6. General provision for loan losses	635,557,637
7. Specific provision for loan losses	2,363,601,261
8. Return on Equity (ROE)	24.42%
9. Amount of DOSRI loans/advances	155,501,672
10. Ratio of DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio	0.29%
11. Amount of past due DOSRI loans/advances	0.00
12. Ratio of past due DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio	0.00

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI)s.s

We, Alberto S. Villarosa and Joselito E. Mape of the above mentioned Bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(SGD.) JOSELITO E. MAPE
First Vice President

(SGD.) ALBERTO S. VILLAROSA
President & CEO

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME this 7th day of May, 2007 at City of Makati, affiants exhibiting to me their Residence Certificate No. 17705087, issued at City of Makati on February 22, 2007 and Residence Certificate No. 17705085, issued at City of Makati on February 22, 2007.

(SGD.) FELIPE I. ILEDAN, JR.
NOTARY PUBLIC
Until Dec. 31, 2008
PTR No. 5316420
01-02-2007; Manila

Doc. No. 498
Page No. 101
Book No. XVIII
Series of 2007

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Bank and its Subsidiaries and Affiliates)
As of March 30, 2007

ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Items		P 2,254,258,447
Due from Bangko Sentral		15,014,533,252
Due from Other Banks		3,346,538,563
Interbank Loans Receivable		13,165,628,794
Trading Account Securities (Net)		62,172,708,566
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		1,122,327,391
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)		31,923,333,639
Equity Investments (Net)		902,194,704
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (Net)		1,332,799,537
Other Assets (Net):		
Property Owned/Acquired		1,784,181,441
Others		4,433,382,870
TOTAL ASSETS		P 137,451,887,204
LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits		P 22,142,010,005
Savings Deposits		51,282,121,138
Time Deposits		28,719,607,676
Special/Other Deposits		1,963,348,217
Due to Bangko Sentral		46,981,490
Due to Banks		18,780,685
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		662,881,481
Bills Payable:		
BSP-Rediscounts/Special Programs		156,979,705
Interbank Borrowings		7,162,660,233
Others		1,724,818,695
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		713,438,877
Other Liabilities		7,370,640,206
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (incl. of Unamortized Premium/Discount)		2,996,935,787
TOTAL LIABILITIES		P 124,961,204,195
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		
Capital Stock		P 4,981,626,239
Surplus		5,216,194,650
Surplus Reserves		221,100,000
Other Capital Accounts		2,071,762,120
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		P 12,490,683,009
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		P 137,451,887,204
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit		P 5,488,767,498
Bills for Collection		2,093,756,024
Spot/Future Exchange Bought		34,160,417,259
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		36,951,345,469
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements		9,240,518,267
Invested in:		
Government Securities	P 1,386,278,326	
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stock	774,313,039	
Loans and Discounts	4,328,779,726	
Other Assets	2,751,147,176	
Accountabilities:		
Trust and Other Fiduciary	1,894,452,635	
Investment/Fund Management	4,657,550,032	
Unearned Income and Other Accountabilities	2,688,515,600	
Other Contingent Accounts		3,302,222,355
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		P 91,237,026,872

OTHER INFORMATION:

1. Deposits of:

a) Government	1,892,999,698
b) Banks	8,171,469,271
c) Trust Department	905,540,510

2. List of Bank's Financial Subsidiaries:
   - a) Security Finance, Inc.
   - b) SB Cards Corporation
   - c) SB Forex, Incorporated
   - d) SB Capital Investment Corp.
   - e) Landlink Property Investments (SPV-AMC), Inc.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI)s.s

We, Alberto S. Villarosa and Joselito E. Mape of the above mentioned Bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

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First Vice President

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President & CEO

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(SGD.) FELIPE I. ILEDAN, JR.
NOTARY PUBLIC
Until Dec. 31, 2008
PTR No. 5316420
01-02-2007; Manila

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Website: http://www.utechsystem.net

New data indicate more oil off Palawan

By Abigail L. Ho

FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION OF ITS 3D seismic survey on Service Contract 54, Australia-based Nido Petroleum Ltd. has discovered an area on the petroleum block that has the potential to produce up to 450-million barrels of oil.

In a disclosure to the Australian Stock Exchange, the company said that based on the interpretation of the seismic data, SC 54's Coron North Prospect was indeed "a strong drilling opportunity."

"Although further technical and commercial analysis remains to be completed before Coron North is mature for drilling, Nido and its partner, Yilgarn (Petroleum Philippines Pty. Ltd.), are excited by the strength and potential size of the structure as confirmed by the 3D seismic," the May 11 disclosure said.

Apart from the Coron North Prospect, Nido said the seismic data showed that shallow waters on the eastern part of SC 54 could contain drilling opportunities that would not cost the company too much money to pursue and yet generate some cash flow.

"Nido is focused on finding new opportunities here, which may be quickly and inexpensively brought into production to generate early cash flow. Nido has identified 24 of these structures in SC 54, similar and nearby to those currently producing in the Nido oil fields, which may allow Nido the opportunity of rapid production and commercialization," the disclosure said.

Some 640 sq km of 3D seismic data were acquired from SC 54 at a cost of $3.5 million.

Data gathering was conducted from November 2006 to January 2007. Interpretation was then done in Perth, Australia, by a team composed of SC 54 shareholders Nido and Yilgarn.

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Fil-Estate Land to issue $10M worth of bonds

PROPERTY DEVELOPER FIL-ESTATE LAND Inc. (Feli) yesterday signed an agreement with LIM Advisors Ltd. (LIM), a Hong Kong-based advisory and fund management company, on the initial issuance by Feli of $10 million worth of bonds convertible into Feli shares.

The agreement sets a pre-agreed conversion price of P1.50 a share. The bonds will have a maturity of five years and earn 4 percent a year.

The terms of the agreement with LIM required that the proceeds of the financing should be used exclusively to fund specific projects.

Feli chair John L. Sobrepeña said the issuance of the convertible notes was part of a series of Feli's capital-raising activities intended to meet the funding requirements of key projects such as the Twin Lakes community in Laurel, Batangas, Harbourtown in Nasugbu, Batangas, Santa Barbara project in Iloilo City, Renaissance 5000 condominium and the Manila Southwoods subdivision expansion project.

Sobrepeña expressed optimism that Feli was now strategically poised to launch new and bigger projects following the substantial improvement in the property sector.

Convertible bonds or notes are financial instruments which allow the issuer to raise funds with low annual coupon rates. With the bonds, there is a high possibility of immediately paying off the obligation should the investors choose to convert the notes into company shares.

Convertible notes have the qualities of both debt and equity. Issuers take advantage of the generally low coupon rates and the likelihood of prompt payment, while investors generally enjoy the potential upside of converting into shares worth much higher than the stated conversion price.

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 11, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	66.5	67.5	66.5	67	2,256,400
65.5	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	61	62	61	62	2,241,400
935	630	China Banking Corp.	910	920	910	920	10,360
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	300
119	60	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	104	111	104	109	298,480
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.54	3,520,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	61.5	64	61.5	62.5	2,879,900
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	46	47	46	47	91,900
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	63.5	64	63.5	64	1,200
72	40	Philippine Bank of Communications	51	51	51	51	1,000
39.57	13.04	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	29	29.5	29	29.5	3,577,500
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	86	86	85	85	127,600
65.77	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	62	62	61.5	62	1,309,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
7.7	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	68,000
0.8	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	200,000
39	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	10,000
2,000.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,635.00	1,650.00	1,635.00	1,650.00	1,760
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.35	7,694,000
2.4	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.26	2.3	105,000
1,005.00	200	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	590	620	590	620	8,320
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,135.00	2,140.00	2,135.00	2,135.00	220
1.94	1.02	iVantage Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.76	1.76	9,551,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
62.5	41	First Gen Corp.	59	60	59	59	2,042,300
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	76	76.5	76	76	810,000
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Company Inc.	12	12.25	11.75	11.75	4,924,200
82	13	Manila Electric Company A	80	82	80	81	434,200
82.5	20.25	Manila Electric Company B	80.5	82.5	80.5	81	1,655,100
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.9	6	5.9	6	52,165,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.2	5.2	5	5	7,826,000
2.2	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	11,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	100,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.5	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.9	5.5	4.9	5.4	1,127,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.12	2.14	1,038,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26.5	26	26.5	16,800
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	54	55	54	54	1,262,900
1.62	0.69	RFM Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	40,000
4.05	2.34	Roxas Holdings	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	140,000
77	61	San Miguel Corp. A	70	77	70	76	722,200
88	68	San Miguel Corp. B	81	88	81	87	890,100
0.61	0.2	Swift Foods Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
23	15.75	Universal Robina Corp.	16	16.75	15.75	16	6,603,900
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.3	1.07	EEI Corp.	5	5.3	5	5.1	10,994,000
4.5	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	7,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	9	9.2	9	9.2	1,702,000
7.5	2.04	Philippine National Const. Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.0	5.9	2,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.84	1.9	1.84	1.88	16,167,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.2	3,712,000
0.99	0.33	Metro Alliance Hold'gs and Eqts. B	0.8	0.84	0.8	0.84	80,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.43	0.06	Picop Resources Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.31	14,670,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.05	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.7	3.75	3.7	3.75	399,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.0675	0.0675	800,000
0.92	0.17	APC Group Inc.	0.81	0.92	0.81	0.91	261,500,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. A	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	30,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	249,200,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	27,400,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.7	8.8	15,629,000
0.016	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	50,700,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	1,226,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.8	0.83	0.8	0.8	1,000,000
2.26	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.18	2.22	2.16	2.18	3,309,000
680	327.5	Ayala Corp.	610	630	605	610	309,170
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.95	4.95	4.65	4.65	178,000
4.45	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.85	4.1	3.85	3.95	32,067,000
9.1	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	8.9	9.1	8.9	8.9	3,100,000
6	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.3	186,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	3.5	3.5	3	3	147,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12.25	6,128,800
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	10,000
13.25	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	11.5	13.25	11.5	12.5	1,609,900
4.55	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.35	4.55	4.3	4.4	5,768,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.65	3.65	28,000
0.48	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.44	0.47	0.44	0.46	9,660,000
1.7	1.2	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	22,000
407.5	205	SM Investments Corp.	385	392.5	382.5	392.5	365,660
0.51	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.44	0.46	0.42	0.44	167,190,000
0.85	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.75	0.76	0.73	0.73	1,010,000
1.38	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.28	1.32	1.28	1.32	440,000
0.41	0.05	Unioil Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.3	13,520,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.17	0.175	0.17	0.175	2,360,000
0.55	0.15	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	100,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Company Inc.	1.48	1.56	1.48	1.54	10,884,000
0.58	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.47	390,000
18.75	10.25	Ayala Land Inc.	18.25	18.75	17.5	18	24,258,400
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.38	1.38	9,782,000
3.1	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	2.65	2.7	2.65	2.7	1,610,000
2	1	Cebu Property Venture and Dev't Corp.A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	450,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	10,000
0.54	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	300,000
0.54	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.51	0.53	0.49	0.52	10,620,000
0.31	0.14	EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	10,000
3.1	0.64	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	20,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.79	0.8	0.78	0.78	19,600,000
0.185	0.027	Ever Gotesco Res. and Hold'gs Inc.	0.18	0.185	0.175	0.185	42,350,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	1,340,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.74	1.76	1.72	1.72	44,045,000
0.33	0.05	Gotesco Land Inc. A	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.28	750,000
0.33	0.0525	Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	70,000
3.35	2.04	Highlands Prime Inc.	2.44	2.44	2.44	2.44	45,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	63,000,000
0.016	0.005	Interport Resources Corp. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	6,000,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.42	9,390,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.72	0.74	0.72	0.72	3,430,000
3.95	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	3.75	3.85	3.75	3.8	192,965,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.45	4.45	149,000
0.28	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.195	3,350,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.62	0.6	0.61	5,160,000
3.5	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	50,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	18	19	18	19	2,524,900
5.2	1.23	SM Development Corp.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.1	1,431,000
13	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12	15,332,400
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.72	0.75	0.72	0.73	1,720,000
0.27	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.205	0.235	0.205	0.22	36,950,000
1.74	0.3	Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc.	1.44	1.46	1.36	1.38	1,967,000
		MEDIA					
31.5	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31.5	31.5	31	31	80,100
1.14	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	50,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.66	3,996,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,355.00	1,355.00	1,340.00	1,340.00	127,010
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,560.00	2,585.00	2,560.00	2,565.00	116,490
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	1,243,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	17,930,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8	8	7.8	7.8	235,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.9	7	6.8	6.9	3,077,000
0.075	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.065	0.0625	0.065	3,400,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. A	0.026	0.028	0.026	0.028	11,700,000
2.9	1.42	Ionics Inc.	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	58,000
0.09	0.025	PhilWeb.Com Inc.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	401,500,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.14	2.16	2.12	2.12	340,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.54	1.58	1.54	1.58	632,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	28.5	29	27.5	28	4,638,000
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.98	2	1.98	2	1,884,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	4.05	4.05	3.95	4	3,922,000
4.3	2.7	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	8,000
0.54	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.51	0.54	0.49	0.52	23,920,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	1	1	0.98	0.98	140,000
		EDUCATION					
966.67	650	Far Eastern University Inc.	720	720	720	720	1,000
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	2,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
4.35	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	3.95	4.1	3.95	4.1	4,018,000
16	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	15.25	15.75	15	15.75	4,312,000
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	27.5	27.5	27	27.5	213,200
50	22	Prime Gaming Philippines Inc.	40	40	40	40	500
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	104,400,000
7.6	2.6	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.6	819,000
7.7	2.55	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	6.7	7	6.7	6.9	418,000
20.5	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	20	20	19.5	19.5	3,041,400
14.75	8.7	Benguet Corp. A	13.25	13.75	13.25	13.5	220,100
35	20	Benguet Corp. B	27	27	27	27	7,700
2.2	0.0802	Geograce Resources Philippines Inc.	2.14	2.2	2.08	2.12	29,495,000
0.41	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	12,490,000
0.45	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	2,170,000
0.037	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.036	0.036	0.035	0.035	395,800,000
0.04	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.038	0.04	0.038	0.039	406,800,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	514,900,000
5.5	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.4	8,685,000
32	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	28.5	28.5	27.5	27.5	327,000
0.87	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	80,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.4	1.42	7,152,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	25,430,000
0.017	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	240,200,000
0.019	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.019	10,100,000
14.81	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.5	11	10.5	10.75	645,000
0.0174	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.016	153,500,000

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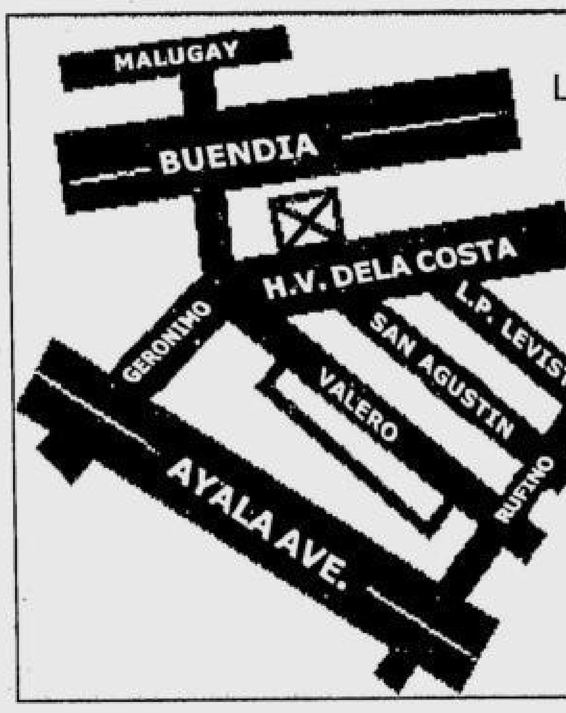

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LAFARGE SEMENTO

PSE nets ₱102.95M in Q1

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE reported a net income of P102.95 million in the first quarter, up 90.14 percent from P54.14 million in the same period last year, boosted by higher trading volumes and helped by slightly lower expenses.

In a financial report, the PSE said first-quarter operating income grew 48.8 percent to P200.33 million from P134.6 million a year ago.

Higher membership fees, which accounted for 16.8 percent of total operating income, were higher by 107.9 percent as a result of bigger trading volumes during the period. The PSE explained that membership fees consist of subscription fees (which are fixed fees and pertain to terminal connection fees); processing fees (on block sales) and transaction fees (on daily buying and selling volume).

Listing fees rose 22.6 percent to P15.4 million due to higher amounts collected from follow-on listings. Listing fees accounted for 41.75 percent of operating income.

Service fees of the Securities Clearing Corp. of the Philippines, a wholly owned clearing house of the PSE, rose 140 percent to P53 million in the first quarter from P21.99 million. These fees accounted for 26.4 percent of operating income.

Operating expenses dipped slightly by 0.54 percent to P57.6 million in the first quarter from P57.9 million a year ago.

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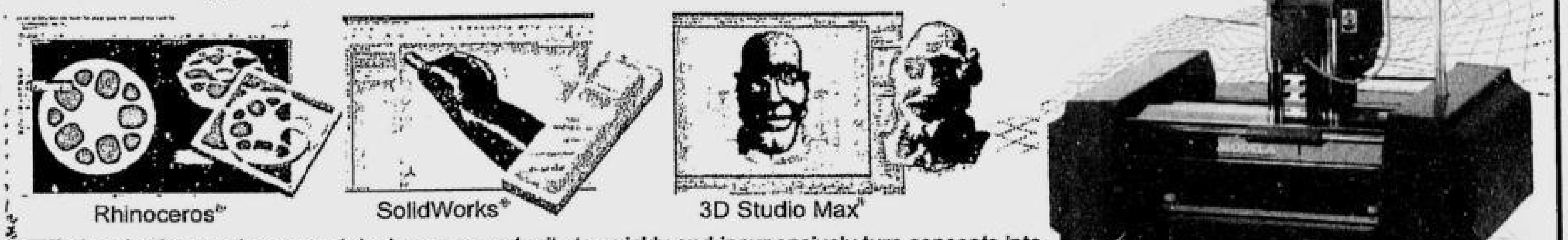

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OFW remittances up by 26.4% in March

First quarter level hits $3.5 billion

By Doris C. Dumlao

MONEY SENT HOME BY OVERSEAS FILipino workers through the banking system surged by 26.4 percent to $1.3 billion in March from year-ago level, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

This was the third consecutive that OFW inflows posted a double-digit growth.

The March inflows brought the first-quarter remittance level to $3.5 billion or 24 percent higher than last year's level.

"This was mainly the result of innovative remittance schemes offered by financial institutions and the enhanced links established with their foreign counterparts," BSP Gov. Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

"Over the years, financial institutions have continuously forged tie-ups with remittance centers overseas, thus, increasing access to financial services and facilitating transfers by overseas-based Filipinos to their beneficiaries," he said.

The strong growth was recorded despite the decline in the number of OFWs deployed during the first quarter compared to year-ago level.

Based on preliminary data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, the total number of workers who left for abroad dropped by 10.6 percent in the first quarter to 251,009 over a year ago.

The deployment of both land-based and sea-based workers fell by 9.2 percent and 14.8 percent, respectively.

"However, the profile of OFWs has been changing, with the deployment of more professionals and higher paid workers rising," Tetangco said.

The deployment outlook remained favorable as the Filipino workers' competence and technical skills, as well as high degree of trainability, continued to support the demands of host economies, the BSP chief said.

"Continuing bilateral discussions and negotiations being undertaken by the government with major labor-receiving counties are also expected to sustain the strong remittance trend," he said.

The major sources of remittances during the three-month period were the US, Canada, United Kingdom, Italy, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Japan and Hong Kong.

Significant increases were noted in remittances from Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, the UAE and the UK.

OFW remittances have surpassed the $1-billion mark for the ninth consecutive month.

The BSP report does not include funds brought in through informal channels, defined as unlicensed or unregulated operations.

SubicTel sets ₱212-M expansion plan

By Riza T. Olchondra

SUBIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS Company Inc. (SubicTel), a subsidiary of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., said it was investing P212 million in a project that would make Subic Bay Freeport Zone a fiber optic gateway for information and communications technology (ICT) firms.

SubicTel general manager Henry Abes said the project would make the freeport zone part of PLDT's domestic fiber optic network, the country's most extensive fiber optic network.

"Subic Bay Freeport will become a much more attractive haven for ICT investments," Abes said.

The new network will span 285 km of fiber optic cables. These will form redundant loops covering Angeles, Clark, Porac, San Fernando, Guagua, Lubao and Floridablanca in Pampanga, Dinalupihan in Bataan, Subic in Zambales and Subic Bay Freeport.

"(The project) will be completed by PLDT by the end of the year. This will increase the Internet bandwidth capacity of SubicTel, allowing it to provide better quality of service and new services such as bundled voice, data and video," Abes said.

Earlier this year, SubicTel doubled its bandwidth by adding a 45 Mbps pipe from PLDT.

With the installation of the fiber optic network, SubicTel's capacity will surge to 2.5 Gbps. The bandwidth is enough to handle 30,240 voice calls at the same time.

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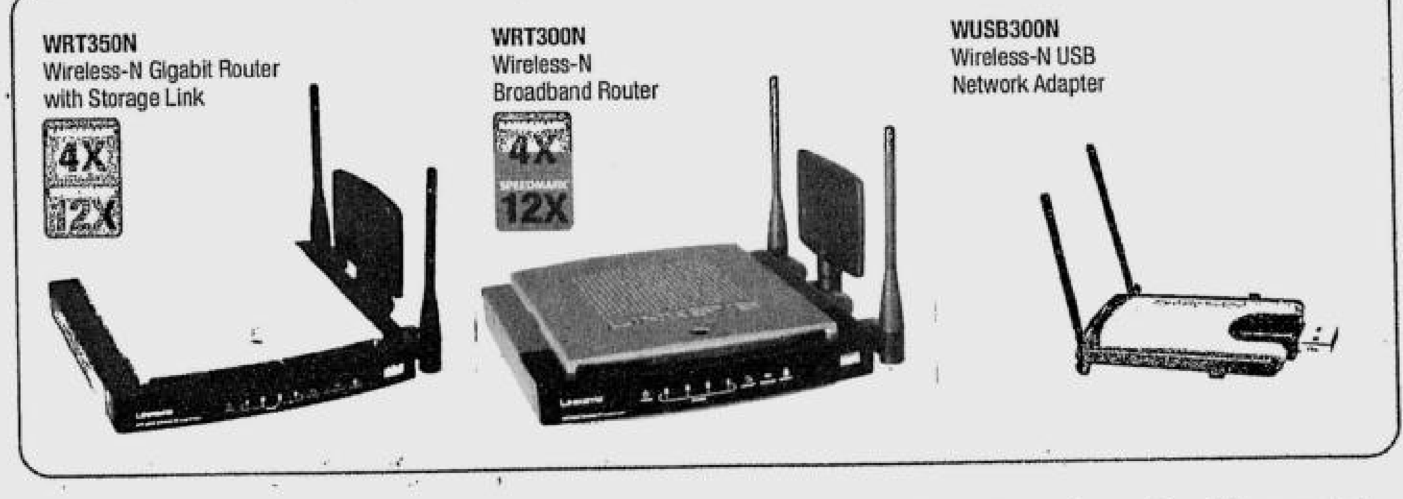

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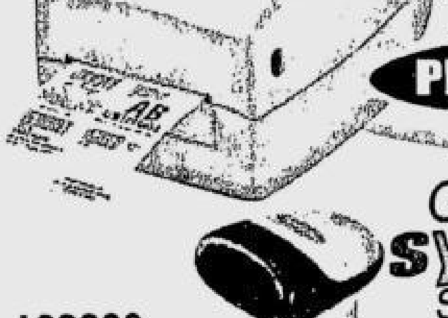
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Export of meat products increased 49% in Q1

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Resumption of trade with Japan raised volume of meat shipped out

By Amy R. Remo

THE VOLUME OF MEAT PRODUCTS shipped out of the country increased by 49 percent in the first quarter this year to about 509,000 kilograms, as the Philippines resumed the export of chicken products to Japan last June.

The country exported 342,000 kilos in the same period last year.

According to Dr. Edna Gray, head of the Meat Import/Export Assistance and Inspection Division of the National Meat Inspection Service, Japan banned chicken exports from the Philippines in the middle of 2005 due to the Avian Flu scare.

Japan is the country's primary market for chicken products.

Data from the NMIS showed, however, that this quarter's export figures are far from the volume of meat exported in 2005, which reached 1.9 million kilos.

For this quarter, Japan accounted for 63 percent of the total shipment as it exported 325,632 kilos of frozen chicken cuts.

Tajikistan is the second biggest export destination, accounting for about 14 percent of the shipment. The country exported chicken franks and cooked hotdogs to the former Soviet republic.

For 2006, a total of 2.2 million kilos were exported in the form of frozen chicken cuts, cooked chicken paws, canned/processed meat, chicken francs/cooked hotdog and dried, milled beef and pork.

Hong Kong, which accounts for about 41 percent of total exports, was the country's biggest market, with about a million kilos of shipments.

Japan, which resumed trade only in June 2006, still emerged as the second strongest market as it took in more than 400,000 kilos of frozen chicken cuts and canned/processed meat.

However, export prices to Japan last year have been relatively low.

China comes in third with total trade volume amounting to 384,120 kilos, mostly chicken parts.

Last year, the country's big poultry players, including San Miguel Foods Corp. and its affiliate Purefoods-Hormel Co. and consolidator-exporter Marzell Inc. and sister-company Royal Cargo Ecozone Inc., also delivered semi-processed, deboned chicken parts to Japan, South Korea, China and Malaysia.

Gov't fortifies defense against bird flu

THE GOVERNMENT, through the National Avian Influenza Task Force, has stepped up its campaign to keep the bird flu virus from reaching the country's shores.

Already, authorities have identified 20 "critical hotspots" around the country, increasing their monitoring activities for any signs of outbreak.

The areas are located as far north as Ilocos Norte to Zamboanga del Sur in the south. Since most of the areas cited are near wetlands, they are classified as high risk in terms of "virus spread" due to the presence of migratory birds, authorities said.

Heightened alert

Bird flu, or avian influenza, is an infectious disease caused by the H5N1 virus.

All birds are believed to be susceptible to the virus, although some species are reported to be more resistant to infection than others. Some forms of bird flu can also afflict humans.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap welcomed the move, calling it a preventive measure on the part of the government, even if no outbreak has yet been reported.

"We've named 30 hotspots years before," Yap told the INQUIRER. "We even had a bird flu scare a few months ago. But it turned out to be a false alarm. This is good because it will put local governments on heightened alert."

Surveillance

The government has been conducting surveillance particularly during the migration period of birds.

Samuel Animas, head of the Bureau of Animal Industry's health division, is encouraging poultry raisers to immediately report any tell-tale signs of the disease to their nearest government veterinarian.

Among the symptoms of bird flu infection in chickens are: Decrease in activity or movements, drastic decline in egg production, facial swelling with swollen bluish-violet-colored combs and wattles, difficulty in breathing and diarrhea.

Animas also said that monitoring is also being done in other parts of the country, particularly the provinces bordering Indonesia, and other places with high concentration of ducks.

Another important preventive move is the opening of the first Regional Avian Influenza Diagnostic Laboratory.

The laboratory in San Fernando City, Pampanga is the first of four facilities that the Bureau of Animal Industry would be setting up across the country through the assistance of the Japan Trust Programme.

Amy R. Remo

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
TSUCHIYA KOGYO (PHILS.), INC. Zone 2 Bldg., 15 DBP Rd., Malunggay St., FTI, Taguig City	Takeshi Kitakubo	Technical Advisor
SOJITZ PHILIPPINES CORP. 24/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Miho Ishiguro	Japanese Affairs Officer
MAERSK-FILIPINAS INC. 51/F PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Ave. cor. Rufino St., Makati City	Kenneth Mun Wai Chan	General Manager-Finance
TRES CULTURE CALL CENTER CORPORATION 305 Katipunan Ave., Quezon City	Ki Wan Kim	General Manager
DOM AUSTRALIA IMMIGRATION ASSISTANT INC. Unit # 2409 Herrera Tower, Salcedo Vill., Makati City	Myunggyu Chang	President / Chairman of the Board
SUNSTAR PRIME ENTERPRISE, INC. 1148 Chino Roces Ave., San Antonio, Makati City	Jasvir Kaur Brar	Manager for Human Resource
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WOOIL TRAVEL AGENCY CORP. 3/F Paragon Tower, 531 A. Flores St., Ermita, Manila	Jung Wool Yang	Director
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FRESHTEX PHILIPPINES, INC. Km. 23 East Service Rd., Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Suresh Kumar Doodi	DC Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

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(PDI-May 16, 2007)

Markets cheer peaceful conduct of polls

From page B1

season and the removal of political risks which, in turn, will increase the possibility of the Philippines getting a (sovereign credit) upgrade," said Marcelo Ayes, senior vice president at Rizal Commercial Bank of the Philippines.

The government's long-term foreign currency debt is currently rated two notches below investment grade by Fitch, three notches below by Standard & Poor's and four notches below by Moody's. All three major debt watchdogs have a "stable" outlook on these ratings, meaning there is no more risk of a downgrade.

Ayes said that investors have already discounted that the administration would not get majority of the seats in the Senate.

"What they are monitoring is who will end up controlling Congress," Ayes said.

As any impeachment initiative against the President must originate in Congress, investors see it as crucial that the administration has enough allies in the Lower House. Otherwise, they fear that efforts could be diverted toward political survival and away from economic reforms.

Currency traders added that overseas Filipino workers have started sending money for the tuition payments and other expenses of their local dependents ahead of the school openings in June.

"The remittances in June are even higher than the inflows in December because they are really obliged to send money for school expenses," Ayes said.

As the crucial 47:$1 barrier had been breached, he said the next major support for the dollar would be at 46.50, after which the next target would be 46:$1.

The peso has now climbed by P1.97 or 4 percent since ending at 49.03 in 2006.

In the equities market, the PSEi price barometer has so far gained 14.29 percent this year.

"I believe the market is up based on two things. One, the market is playing catch up to the region after it rallied yesterday (Monday) on the back of the strong performance of the US market, and two, it is reacting to the peaceful elections. I think the market will be driven by external and internal factors as prices have moved ahead of its fundamentals," said Conrado Bate, president at Citiseconline.com said.

PSE president Francis Lim said that what was remarkable about yesterday's trading was that, for the first time in over 10 years, the main index breached the 3,400-point mark.

"I believe that the surge in local stock prices is the immediate reward that our country has enjoyed after the country conducted what many observers consider as relatively clean and peaceful elections on Monday," Lim said.

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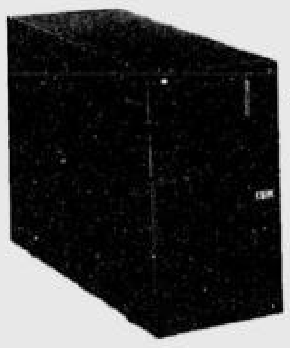
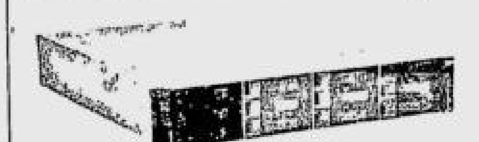
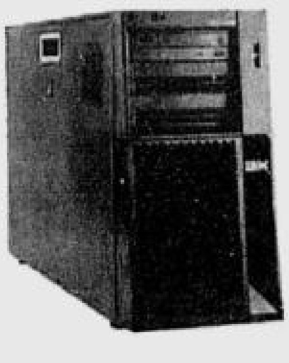




World Bank commits aid for rehab of Transco facilities

By Abigail L. Ho

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORP. is seeking "emergency funding" from the World Bank to finance the rehabilitation of its transmission lines and other facilities, particularly those damaged by last year's super typhoons.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the multilateral lender had already expressed its willingness to provide emergency funding for Transco's rehabilitation efforts, through an offer of help to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Transco is currently in discussions with the World Bank and the Department of Finance regarding this. The emergency facility of the World Bank is being tapped because it can be mobilized faster than the bank's other facilities," he said.

Since the need to rehabilitate Transco's facilities was urgent, however, he said work could already proceed as soon as possible.

When the funds come, the amount advanced for the rehabilitation efforts could be reimbursed, he said.

Since rehabilitation works would not be completed until December, he said Transco would have to put in place "extraordinary measures" to ensure that power could still be efficiently transmitted in the affected areas, particularly during the typhoon season.

Transco senior vice president and chief operating officer Jesusito Sulit said the firm would be pre-positioning some emergency restoration systems in areas where necessary.

ERS are lightweight mini-towers that can be built within two to three days. A steel tower takes around six months to put in place.

For these preparations, Sulit said Transco would have to shell out some P60 million. This would come from internally generated funds and would be outside of the World Bank's emergency funding.

In January, Transco awarded two contracts worth P424.4 million to Chinese firm Xian Electric Engineering Co. for the restoration of 42 steel towers toppled by Typhoon Milenyo in late September.

Indian firm Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd., on the other hand, secured close to P660 million worth of contracts for the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of steel towers and transmission lines in areas ravaged by Typhoon Reming late last year.

The Milenyo-related project should be completed by July, while the Reming-related project should be done by December.

These rehabilitation efforts would be covered by the World Bank's emergency funding, but would first be funded by internally generated cash.

Gov't to review draft IRR of e-commerce law

3 line agencies tasked to enforce order

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND Industry yesterday said a draft order that provided the rules on protecting consumers in the electronic trade of goods and services was under review.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said the draft order contained the implementing rules of Republic Act No. 8792 or the Electronic Commerce Act of 2000, which regulates and supervises the development of e-commerce in the country.

"Over the years, information and communications technology had become more relevant and crucial to the development of trade in the country," Favila said.

"Special attention must be accorded to this sector, particularly from the government, by coming up with useful policies that will facilitate its growth," he added.

Favila said the proposed order intensified the government's commitment to uphold the rights of consumers and put order in retail practices.

"As businesses come up with new approaches to market their products, we continue to explore ways on how to protect the public against unfair trade practices," the trade chief said.

He explained that upon its approval, the order would be enforced by three implementing agencies—the Department of Health with respect to food, drugs, cosmetics, devices and hazardous substances; the Department of Agriculture for agricultural and marine products, and the DTI for all other consumer goods and services.

Trade Undersecretary Zenaida C. Maglaya, who is in charge of consumer welfare, said the guidelines would ensure that consumers would have a forum in which to lodge their complaints when they fall prey to deceptive sales acts or misleading advertisements through the Internet, cellular phones and other electronic means.

Maglaya said a concluding public hearing and consultation, aimed at gathering comments and inputs from the public, was scheduled on Friday at the DTI Building in Makati City.

MPIC to invest more in healthcare

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENTS CORP., THE flagship firm of Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific Co. Ltd., is keen on making investments in healthcare and power generation.

MPIC chair Manuel V. Pangilinan said in an interview late last week that MPIC might acquire one or two hospitals possibly in key provincial cities to replicate the success of Makati Medical Center, which is 33-percent owned by MPIC.

"The successful experience of Makati Med can be replicated in other hospitals not only in Metro Manila but also in other major provincial cities. We will also continue investing in infrastructure projects," Pangilinan said.

MPIC has agreed to subscribe to P750 million in convertible subordinated notes of Makati Med. The hospital offered a total of P900 million worth of notes.

The proceeds of this offering will be used to finance portion of Makati Med's new medical building and to upgrade existing hospital facilities and equipment.

The investment is expected to be completed this month. MPIC's subscription will represent about a 33-percent stake in Makati Med.

CURRENCIES

May 15, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.738007	1.000000	47.2370
Japan	Yen	0.006131	0.008308	0.3924
United Kingdom	Pound	1.460812	1.979400	93.5009
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094475	0.128013	6.0470
Switzerland	Franc	0.605421	0.820345	38.7506
Canada	Dollar	0.667215	0.904077	42.7059
Singapore	Dollar	0.487101	0.660022	31.1775
Australia	Dollar	0.614443	0.832570	39.3281
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.957683	2.652661	125.3037
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.196791	0.266652	12.5958
Brunei	Dollar	0.485499	0.657851	31.0749
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000114	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.022196	0.030075	1.4207
UAE	Dirham	0.201048	0.272420	12.8683
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.355000	64.0061
Korea	Won	0.000799	0.001083	0.0512
China	Yuan**	0.096091	0.130203	6.1504
Argentina	Peso	0.239613	0.324675	15.3367
Brazil	Real	0.366967	0.497240	23.4881
Denmark	Kroner	0.134203	0.181845	8.5898
India	Rupee	0.018182	0.024637	1.1638
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217061	0.294118	13.8933
Mexico	New Peso	0.068386	0.092663	4.3771
New Zealand	Dollar	0.544574	0.737898	34.8561
Norway	Kroner	0.122124	0.165478	7.8167
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012185	0.016510	0.7799
South Africa	Rand	0.106593	0.144434	6.8226
Sweden	Kroner	0.108609	0.147165	6.9516
Syria	Pound	0.014217	0.019264	0.9100
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022162	0.030030	1.4185
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000344	0.000466	0.0220

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 14, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of May 14, 2007

Tourism advocates push for open skies

From page B1

His firm does business mainly with "inbound" tourist traffic, which he explains is capped, surprisingly, not by the lack of interest in the country's beaches, but by the local system's inability to service so many visitors.

"This is the complaint of the 'inbound' sector," he says. "Demand is on the rise, but we cannot accommodate them."

For critics of the status quo, the blame for the stunted development of the tourism industry in recent years lies unevenly on the shoulders of the country's main flag carrier, Philippine Airlines (PAL).

'Regulatory capture'

Owned by Chinese-Filipino tycoon Lucio C. Tan, the country's biggest airline has been blamed for obstructing the implementation of a so-called "open skies" policy that would allow foreign airlines to ferry passengers to and from the country as much as they would like to.

The airline and its owner have also been accused of using their considerable influence over regulators like the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) to squeeze existing competitors and prevent new ones from entering the market.

During a recent briefing, Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri identified the CAB as one of the five regulatory agencies he described as "prone to regulatory capture."

He pointed out that, in the debate on whether to implement an open skies policy in the country, CAB has invariably defended the status quo, mimicking the line often put forth by PAL.

"The effect is less competition in the industry, poorer service and more expensive air transport costs," Neri said.

The debate over open skies—and the high-stake lobbying behind it—became plain to see after Malacañang issued EO 500, which gave foreign airlines unlimited access to the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) in Clark, Pampanga.

To the surprise of liberalization advocates, however, this was quickly superseded by EO 500-A, which effectively restricted the initiative and emasculated the open skies policy.

Despite the steady stream of criticism, however, PAL is convinced of its hardline stance on the issue. In fact, PAL president Jaime J. Bautista says that the airline and its influential owner were not opposed to the liberalization of the industry.

"We are not against open skies," he says in an interview. "In fact, we support liberalization. But what we want is a kind of liberalization that is fair and equitable."

'National interest' debate

Bautista says that critics of the airline and the tobacco and beer magnate at its helm are "trying to muddle the issue" by expanding the debate and the definition of the term "national interest."

Indeed, PAL's critics say the airline is equating "national interest" with its own interest by restricting airline competition only to the level at which it can compete, to the detriment of other sectors that would benefit from more tourist arrivals like the hotel and service businesses.

Bautista points out that such a broad definition of "reciprocity" is difficult to quantify. He stressed that the debate on open skies should be limited only to what can be empirically measured—the number of passengers and flights that PAL and competing international airlines are allowed to make—instead of a nebulous concept of a "bigger national interest."

"There should be a balance," he says. "The issue shouldn't be muddled."

For Neda's Neri, the move to curtail the access of foreign airlines—and consequently capping the growth of the tourism industry and its almost $3 billion in annual receipts—is clearly against the national interest.

Advocates are now pushing for the adoption of an EO 500-B, which will restore some of the liberal policies set forth in the original order, although it remains to be seen whether it will succeed in its goal of opening up the country to more tourists.

As far as PTAA's Clemente is concerned, however, the growth of the tourism industry is being stunted by PAL's limitations in competing with its international rivals, thus the artificial restrictions imposed locally.

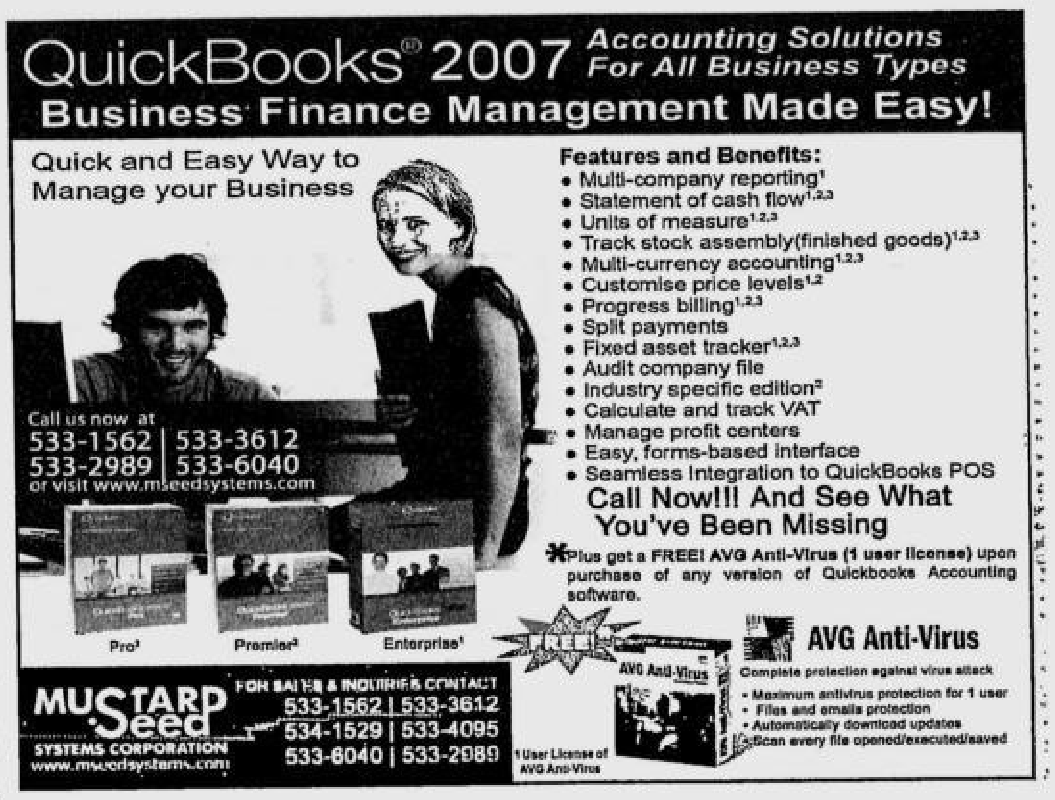
"PAL can't compete with other large Asian airlines in terms of [number of] seats, on-time performance and service," he says. "What we need to do is give consumers the choice."

He points out that the goal of attracting five million foreign tourists into the country by 2010 can easily be achieved if the country can accommodate the demand, both in terms of hotel rooms and airline seats. "We can easily have 3.5 million this year," he says, if only the travel infrastructure were in place.

As it is, with all the obstacles in place, Clemente points out that the travel industry is already growing at a rapid clip.

"It can grow much faster," he says.

(To be continued)



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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Official Seal of National Capital Region, Department of Labor and Employment, to be affixed at the City of Manila, Philippines, this 18th day of April 2007.

(Sgd.) **LOURDES M. TRASMONTE**
Regional Director

(Renewal of this license is thirty (30) days before expiration date)

(PDI - May 16, 2007)

Philippine National Bank

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 29, 2007 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice of Meeting and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 30, 2006
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2006
5. Approval of the 2006 Annual Report
6. Approval of the Amendment of the Articles of Incorporation to withhold the stockholders' pre-emptive right to subscribe to any new or additional shares of the Bank
7. Ratification of All Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
8. Election of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditor
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 31, 2006 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of April 30, 2007 will be entitled to notice of, and vote at, this meeting. Registration will begin at 6:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 24, 2007. Any proxies so received will be validated by the Bank's Corporate Secretary on May 25, 2007, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, February 16, 2007

RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary

Tax perks granted to developer of ₱1-B hotel

Bellevue Manila proponent gets support to build a third tower in Ayala Alabang

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS HAS APproved the granting of tax incentives to the owner and developer of The Bellevue Manila, which is set to build a third tower for approximately P1.05 billion.

Project proponent RPJ development Inc., is 48.27-percent Filipino-owned and 51.73-percent Chinese.

The planned Tower III of The Bellevue Manila hotel at the Westgate Ayala Alabang in Muntinlupa City would have 198 deluxe rooms.

The new building would have 25 stories and would be located next to the other two towers, which have been operating for about four years.

The BOI approved the project in line with the government's support of the country's tourism industry, one of several key development areas listed under the 2006 Investment Priorities Plan.

Tower III represents additional capacity for accommodating tourists RPJ also says the project will generate 120 new jobs.

The project is scheduled to start commercial operations in December 2009 and will cater both to local and foreign tourists.

Foreign tourists, particularly Japanese and Koreans, are expected to account for at least two out of five guests at the hotel.

According to the Department of Tourism, the tourism industry is growing relatively fast compared to the previous decades. But it also cautioned that growth could only go so far, without building additional capacity in terms of accommodation.

From January to March, arrivals grew 8.8 percent to 790,888, most of which were Koreans, Americans and Japanese.

The Koreans represented 21.7 percent of the quarter's total or 171,716, growing 18.6 percent compared to the same quarter of 2006.

In the same period, the Japanese accounted for 13.1 percent, or 103,589, growing 4.5 percent year-on-year.

According to a DOT survey, in 2006, the number of available first-class rooms went up 87.6 percent to 1,668.

Deluxe rooms increased by about 4 percent to 8,103; standard rooms increased 3.4 percent to 3,855; and economy rooms increased 32.6 percent to 570.

LAYING BRICKS AND MORTAR IN CHARITY'S NAME
Globe Telecom president Gerry Ablaza (right) and Globe consumer business head Ferdz de la Cruz (left, foreground) are building a house for typhoon victims in Balatas GK Village, Naga City. Globe has strengthened its partnership with Gawad Kalinga Foundation by providing homes for the poor in calamity stricken areas in the Bicol region.

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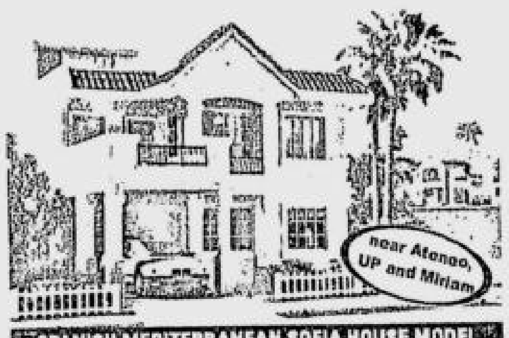

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May 11, 2007

INVITATION TO BID

Interested parties are hereby invited for the supply and delivery of the materials to be used for the following:

1. CONSTRUCTION OF 6.030 KM SAN RAFAEL, MEXICO, 3 PHASE, 13.2 KV TIE UP LINE
2. CONSTRUCTION OF 1.375 KM 69 KV SUB-TRANSMISSION LINE
3. CONSTRUCTION OF 2.718 KM 13.2 KV OVERHEAD 3 PHASE LINE

Bidders must submit the following requirements for pre-qualification: Company Profile, Latest ITR, Latest Audited Financial Statement, business or Mayor's permit, DTI registration, SEC registration.(Original copies to be shown for authentication purpose).

Submission of Pre-qualification Documents - May 17 – 19, 2007
Bid Documents are available on - May 21 – 25, 2007
Date and Time of Pre-bid Conference - May 28, 2007 at 2PM
OPENING OF BIDS - May 31, 2007 at 2PM

Bid documents can be availed from 8:00AM to 5:00PM thru the BAC Chairman or its members by paying the corresponding fee at PELCO I main office, Sto. Domingo, Mexico, Pampanga. Accredited suppliers previously pre-qualified still need to update their files (if necessary) with PELCO I.

Bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security (Cash, Manager's Check, Cashier's Check or Surety Bond) of at least 2.5% of the total bid amount.

PELCO I reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids including application to pre-qualify without stating any reason. For any inquiry, please contact the members of the BAC at telephone numbers stated above.

(Sgd.) ENGR. ROY M. DE LEON
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) ENGR. LOLIANO E. ALLAS
General Manager

(PDI - May 13 & 16, 2007)

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San Jose Academy Batch '86 reunion

The High School Class 1986 of San Jose Academy (Navotas) will hold a grand reunion on June 2 (Saturday) at Pescadores Restaurant in Malabon City. Registration starts at 5:00 pm. For details contact Dean Estudillo (9000272) / Andy Trinidad (6881651) / Ruiza Penano (2839339)

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I have written your name.
—Isaiah 49:15-16

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JOSE A. ALARCA

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

On May 16, 2007

Holy Masses will be offered at the following Churches:

Holy Cross Parish .... 6:00 a.m.
Tanza, Cavite
San Roque Parish .... 6:00 a.m.
Cavite City
Our Lady of Fatima Parish .... 6:00 a.m.
Mandaluyong City
Immaculate Conception Parish .... 6:00 a.m.
Bauan, Batangas
Immaculate Conception Parish .... 6:00 a.m.
Puerto Galera
Basilica of the Immaculate Conception .... 7:00 a.m.
Batangas City
Manila Cathedral - Basilica of the Immaculate Conception .... 7:30 a.m.
Intramuros, Manila
National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help .... 8:00 a.m.
Redemptorist, Baclaran
St. Vincent De Paul Parish .... 8:00 a.m.
San Marcelino St., Ermita, Manila
National Shrine of the Sacred Heart .... 12:15 p.m.
Dao St., San Antonio Village, Makati City
Resurrection Parish .... 5:00 p.m.
Julugan, Tanza, Cavite
St. John Bosco Parish .... 6:00 p.m.
Arnaiz St., Makati City

His wife, **Lourdes Aquino Alarca** and children **Rosalind, Jovie** and **Colet, Grace** and **Elmer, Vicky, Papong** and **Joanne** and sisters **Fely** and **Enie** and grandchildren **Josanne, Jianna, Jego, JB** and **Jupjup** request the pious readers to remember him in their prayers.

AMANDA (Manda) BUELVA BELLEZA

(of Balaton, Lagonoy and Goa, Camarines Sur)

peacefully joined our Lord on May 14, 2007
at the age of 75.

Her husband **Retired Judge Hedulfo (Omping)**, loving children **Elvin** and **Majen, Dinah, Iris** and **Raffy**, and **Jun-Jun**; grandchildren **Nikko, China, Pao, Pia, Jack** and **Missy**; brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at her residence in Bagumbayan Pequeno St., Goa, Camarines Sur.

Interment will be on May 18, 2007 at Goa Catholic Cemetery after the 2:00 PM Mass at Goa Catholic Church.

ENRIQUE ZOBEL

Third Death Anniversary
May 17, 2007

MASSES:

1. SAN ILDEFONSO PARISH CHURCH .... 6:00 AM
   ARNAIZ STREET, MAKATI CITY
2. STO. DOMINGO PARISH CHURCH .... 6:00 AM
   CALATAGAN, BATANGAS
3. ST. ALFONSUS DE LIGUORI CHAPEL .... 7:00 AM
   MAGALLANES VILLAGE, MAKATI CITY
4. SANCTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH ... 7:30 AM
   FORBES PARK, MAKATI CITY
5. ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH CHURCH .... 6:30 PM
   ARNAIZ STREET, MAKATI CITY
6. ST. JAMES THE GREAT PARISH CHURCH ..., 6:30 PM
   AYALA ALABANG VILLAGE,
   MUNTINLUPA CITY

ATTY. AUGUSTO P. PACIS, SR.

of Cabugao, Ilocos Sur

USAFFE (Bataan) Veteran
Retired City Treasurer of Cebu City

peacefully joined our Lord on May 13, 2007
at the age of 90.

His bereaved wife, **FRANZ**; children **CESAR, GIN, EMY, SUSAN, GRACE, CHUCK, TRACY** and **TINA**; grandchildren, in-laws, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Cebu Rolling Hills Memorial Chapels, Cebu City. Interment will take place at Cebu Memorial Park at 4:00 PM tomorrow, May 17, 2007, after the funeral mass at 3:00 PM in Rolling Hills, Emmanuel 2 Chapel.

ATTY. FELIPE E. LUSTRE

peacefully joined our Lord on May 10, 2007 at the age of 80.

His bereaved family: wife **Atty. Amy Almodal-Lustre**; children: **Minnie, Grace, Divina , Diwata, Atty. Beth**; sons-in-law: **Jay Luspo, Bart Sanchez, Dennis Montoya, Richard Talbot (†)**; grandchildren: **Gerald, Tomasa Allen, Paulina,** and **Lauren** request family and friends to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Our Lady of Peace Memorial Chapels, Antipolo City. Cremation will be held today, May 16, 2007 at Loyola Crematorium (Marikina City) after the 2 p.m. Mass at Antipolo Cathedral.

Notify family and friends of a loved one who had just passed away.

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HYUNDAI i30

Hyundai scoop

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES of tagging along to a car manufacturer's annual dealers' convention is that you might get a scoop. You may catch a glimpse of the latest model being prepped for launching on the European market, even peek at the engine and sit in the driver's seat.

"We wish we could cover your eyes," said Ma. Fe Perez-Agudo with a smile, referring to the i30 during the tour of Hyundai's manufacturing base in Ulsan, Korea last Wednesday. The EVP and chief operating officer of Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (Hari) had invited 13 Philippine journalists to the 2007 Hyundai Convention in Korea of over 100 dealers from 10 Asia-Pacific countries. Together with Hari chair emeritus Richard L. Lee, Ms Fe, as we came to call her, accompanied the Philippine group to almost all the events and activities, including the drive-by tour of the awesome Hyundai Heavy Industries shipbuilding complex, the biggest in the world.

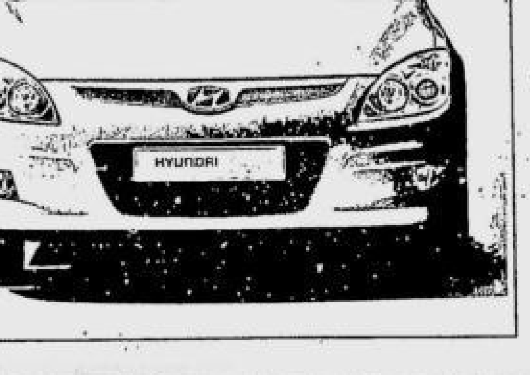
Ulsan tour

For us motoring media, of course, the highlight of the six-day dealers' convention was the walking tour of one of the manufacturing facilities at the Hyundai Motor Co. (HMC) Ulsan plant. Consisting of five independent manufacturing facilities on 1,215 acres of land complete with its own pier capable of accommodating three ships of up to 42,000 tons displacement each, the Ulsan plant is the single largest auto manufacturing complex in the world and serves as HMC's global manufacturing hub as well as the core of the Korean auto industry.

With about 34,000 employees and state-of-the-art robotics technology, the Ulsan plant can produce 1.6-million vehicles annually. It was there, at the end of the walking tour, that we spotted the i30, the stylish new Hyundai hatchback that was unveiled at the recent Geneva Motor Show and is destined for the European market. The i30 will be offered with two engines to choose from: a 2.0-liter CVVT (constant variable valve timing) petrol powerplant or a 1.6-liter CRDi (common rail direct injection) turbo intercooler diesel engine.

Whether the i30 will be brought here by Hari is still up in the air. As it is, Hari already offers the widest range of motor vehicles to Philippine car buyers. In the passenger car category, there are the Azera, Sonata, Coupé, Accent and Getz while in the recreational vehicle segment, Hari markets the Starex, Tucson, Santa Fe and Veracruz. (Hari stopped selling the Matrix microvan after its sourcing was transferred to Haos in Turkey, resulting in a higher price.)

Key markets



Turkey's Haos (Hyundai Assan Otomotiv Sanayi Ve Ticaret A.S.), which exports vehicles to surrounding countries and the European Union, is one of four HMC plants outside Korea serving four key markets. In May 2005, HMC opened a manufacturing plant in Alabama in the United States, the country that is considered the world's most important auto market. HMC's Chinese subsidiary, Beijing Hyundai Motor Co., is the only automaker to be located in China's capital. The Hyundai Motor India Plant has become the base for small car manufacturing operations supplying South Asia. A second plant is underway in India.

In its home country, HMC operates two other plants aside from Ulsan. In Asan, HMC manufactures passenger cars for export while Jeonju, one of the biggest commercial vehicle manufacturing plants in the world, specializes in buses, 2.5-ton and heavier trucks and special purpose vehicles.

CBU, not CKD

All this info brings us to the big question: when and where will HMC establish a manufacturing plant to supply the Southeast Asian and Asia-Pacific car markets? At the farewell dinner in Jeju, an HMC executive told me that HMC wants to put up a CBU (completely built unit) manufacturing plant, not only a CKD (completely knocked down) assembly plant in the Asia-Pacific region. This would require, among other things, a foundry, an engine manufacturing facility, a stamping shop, an automated body welding line, a paint shop and a final trim and assembly line.

Wherever and whenever a new CBU plant starts operating, it will spur even more the dynamic growth of HMC's global manufacturing network. Starting from zero only 40 years ago, by 2005 HMC was producing three million vehicles worldwide.

In recent years, after HMC chair Mong-Koo Chung made a commitment to fast-track quality improvement, Hyundai vehicles began reaping awards for quality, design, reliability, durability, safety, crash-test ratings, customer satisfaction as well as best-in-class and Car of the Year Awards from respected international research organizations such as J.D. Power & Associates, Consumer Reports Magazine and the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Looks like HMC is well on its way to becoming a global leader in the automotive industry, doesn't it?

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: A closed mouth gathers no feet.

Discovering the Forester 2.0X's inner beauty

Text and photos
by Charles E. Buban

THE FORESTER 2.0X is more practical than most SUVs for exploring the urban jungle and better for handling surprises on the road.

THIS WRITER RECENTLY HAD A chance to drive what a lot of people would consider a modest looking crossover sport utility vehicle.

In fact, the white Subaru Forester 2.0X (nonturbo variant) Motor Image Pilipinas loaned a couple of weeks ago, seemed to be capable of delivering no more than what it appeared to be: just a raised station wagon good enough for safely hauling family members or groceries from the supermarket.

But while this crossover SUV is far from being the sexiest or even tough-looking, one should never judge the Forester 2.0X by its looks alone.

Well-engineered

As this writer found out, the Forester 2.0X is an extremely well-engineered vehicle that performs excellently where it really counts: under the hood and on the road.

The Forester 2.0X is powered by a naturally aspirated, 4-cylinder, 16-valve DOHC engine that delivers 124 horsepower, some 50 hp less than its turbocharged sibling.

However, with its lighter weight and efficient weight distribution, this particular Forester variant is able to maximize its engine power to deliver plenty of power for overtaking on the highway and willing eagerness to catapult itself from a standing start to cruising speed.

THE FORESTER 2.0X's competency as an SUV lies in being quick and graceful and utterly competent on the road.

Fun to drive

"The Forester 2.0X is one of the more fun-to-drive crossover SUV in the market today. It offers car buyers Subaru's traditional strengths of easy maneuverability, sure-footed handling in slippery weather and solid build quality," said Motor Image Pilipinas marketing manager Ariel de Jesus.

Based on the World Rally Championship-proven Impreza platform, the Forester 2.0X, as with all Subarus, comes with symmetrical all-wheel drive system, a setup wherein the engine, transmission, driveshaft and rear differential are laid out in a straight line.

De Jesus explained that Subaru's participation in the WRC has helped the carmaker refine its version of symmetrical AWD system: "Subaru's symmetrical AWD system is a permanently engaged system that needs no intervention from the driver and the modified, electronically controlled version on the Forester 2.0 provides both better handling and enhanced traction performance on slippery road surfaces. In addition, the equipped electronically controlled 4-speed automatic transmission improves shift feel, reacting to every change in driving conditions as well as fuel consumption."

Work in harmony

When this symmetrical AWD is combined with a horizontally opposed boxer engine and a four-wheel independent suspension system, the three system components work in harmony to provide exceptional traction, handling, balance and control.

While this may all sound very technical, the bottom line is that they all work constantly, instilling confidence to the driver so that whenever he or she encounters slippery spots or unexpected road obstacles, the Forester 2.0X will just pass through without missing a beat or stream of cuss words or white knuckles.

In conclusion, the Forester 2.0X is a no-brainer choice in the crossover SUV segment. Though not flashy, car buyers should try to test drive this vehicle to see for themselves what De Jesus termed as the "surprises and revelations when driving a Subaru."

Dream garage: practically perfect

(First of two parts)

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

THERE IS NOTHING TO BE Ashamed of in staring into space and fantasizing about cars. This strange behavior is just the adult manifestation of the childhood fascination with toys. Those who have surrendered their youth frown on this. These people think that with every blank-looking, thousand-yard stare comes equally empty and futile daydreaming.

Truth be told, this is not the case. We all know, having been kids once too, that with that dreaming gaze comes a flashflood of cranial activity. A switch flips and we become utterly mired in our imagination. We yearn for and play with the toys that would be, should be ours—even if our minds take us to places that are silly and most often impossible.

Bouts of wishful thinking

Automobiles and their devotees are not exempt from these bouts of wishful thinking. Do you remember the first time you wanted a car that you could never have? I do. I was about 10 and it was the Opel Ascona 400 rally car; having been fascinated by the Tamiya remote-controlled model I saw at the old Lil's Hobby Shop in Goldcrest.

Suffice it to say that there was no way the real thing could be had. The end result is simple. The fixation with rally cars is definitive to this day. Big dreams start small, I guess.

Yet one cannot live practically on a garage filled with race cars. As beautiful as these purpose-built driving machines are the real world must be taken into consideration. It is with age that such compromise is learned, sad as that admission is. Frustrating also is the awareness that a single automobile cannot fulfill one's daily motoring needs and your flights of driving fantasy. There is no "one car that will rule them all" like the one ring in the Tolkien mythos.

Dream garage

One therefore needs a garage full of cars. As economically improbable that idea is, a dream garage is something that must be given serious thought. Wishing is free anyway, ladies and gentlemen.

The first thing that should be the foundation of every garage is the daily drive, a vehicle that will satisfy your commuting needs in the traffic-laden and space-challenged streets of our fair metropolis. Take into consideration too that the price of fuel is likely going to keep heading skyward for the foreseeable future. Look no further than the econobox segment of the market. A small, frugal engine coupled with cavernous practical interior space is the way to go. Think of something in the sub one-liter to 1500 class, preferably a hatchback or a small wagon.

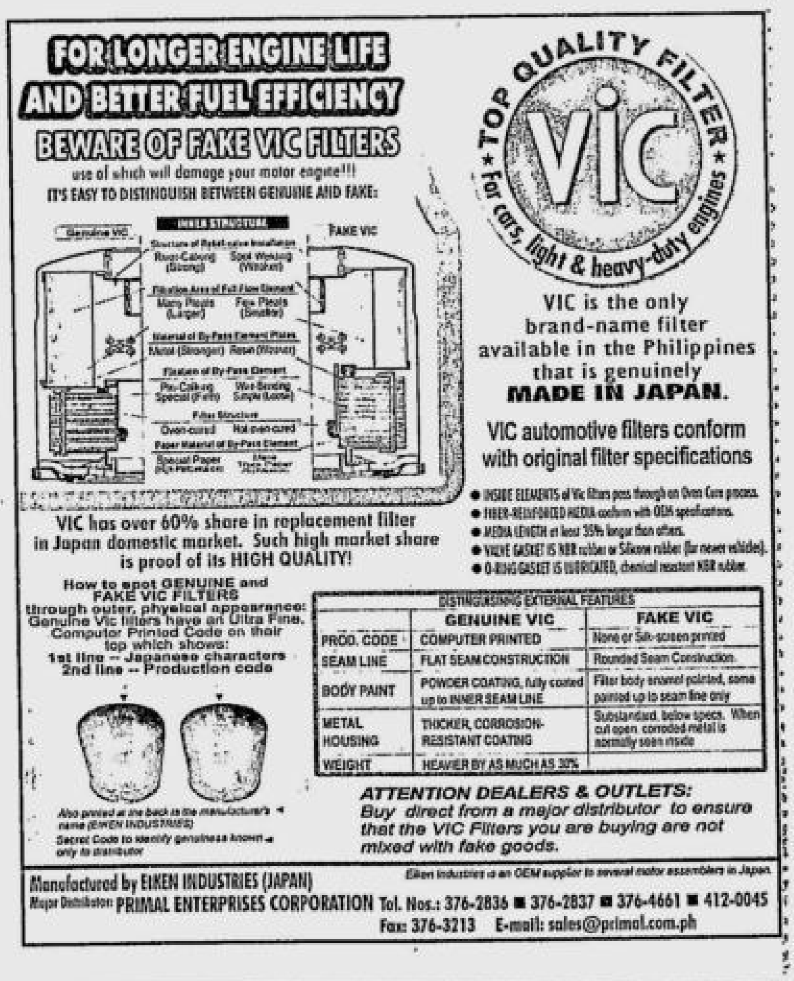
Out-of-town transport

Next on the list is a vehicle that will take care of your needs for out-of-town transport. Choice in this category will depend on a whole lot of factors that are distinct for each motorist. Number of passengers, road conditions to the destinations and cargo capacity are what should be taken into consideration.

This is where the strength of the AUV, SUV and pickup segments comes into play. Their ability to carry loads larger than the average sedan and traverse over terrain that is a little rougher than usual makes these vehicles great choices for the long road trip. Common belief is that diesel is the way to go in this category, because of the perceived savings but at the cost of performance. Common-rail, direct-injection engines are the solution, because of their immense amounts of torque.

These two types of vehicles are the sensible backbone of any solid real-world garage, as they solve the basic problem of everyday transport. Choosing makes and models for these categories is really up to the consumer, as budget and ease of ownership are the No. 1 considerations.

Even removing the financial barriers to choice, there is really no sense in splurging on these vehicles. Save your money on cars that just get you from point A to point B. Believe me, you'll need the funds when the focus of your garage goes from practical to performance. Speed after all, has a hefty price tag.



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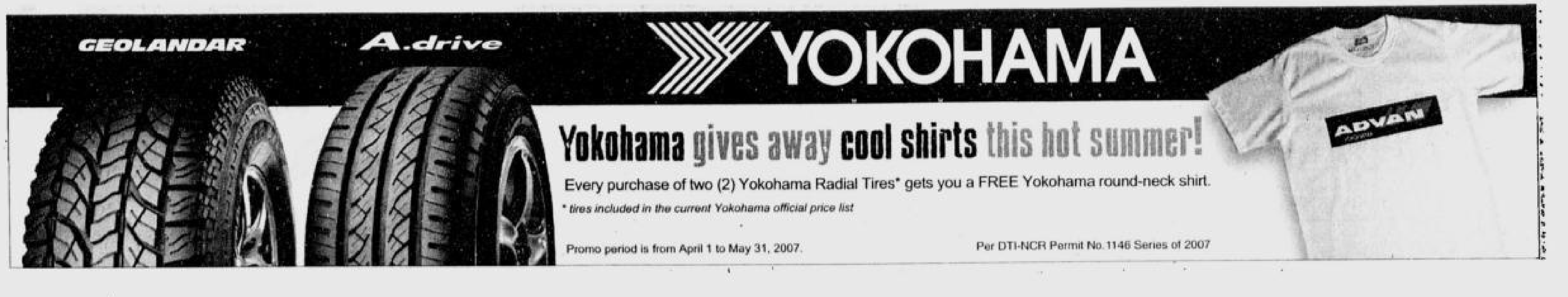

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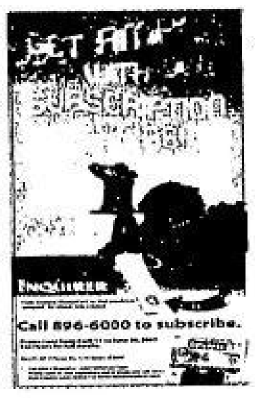
BUSINESS

Pirates ravage IT trade

$119M lost to software crooks in '06



By Riza T. Olchondra

A SURGE IN DEMAND FOR PERSONAL COMPUTERS might have been good for the local IT industry as a whole, but it also resulted in higher software piracy losses, which surged from $76 million in 2005 to $119 million in 2006, said IT market intelligence provider IDC.

According to Walter Lee, vice president for consulting of IDC Asia-Pacific, the rate of piracy figure was obtained by dividing the number of shipments by the number of installed software.

"Because the base value was higher, the value of losses from piracy surged as well," Lee explained

The study of more than 100 markets commissioned by the Business Software Alliance (BSA) revealed that the Philippines' software piracy rate remained unchanged at 71 percent from 2004 to 2006.

The BSA-IDC Global Software Piracy Study covers piracy of all packaged software that runs on personal computers, including desktops, laptops and ultra-portables. The study does not include other types of software such as server- or mainframe-based software. IDC used proprietary statistics for software and hardware shipments and enlisted IDC analysts in 50 countries to confirm software piracy trends.

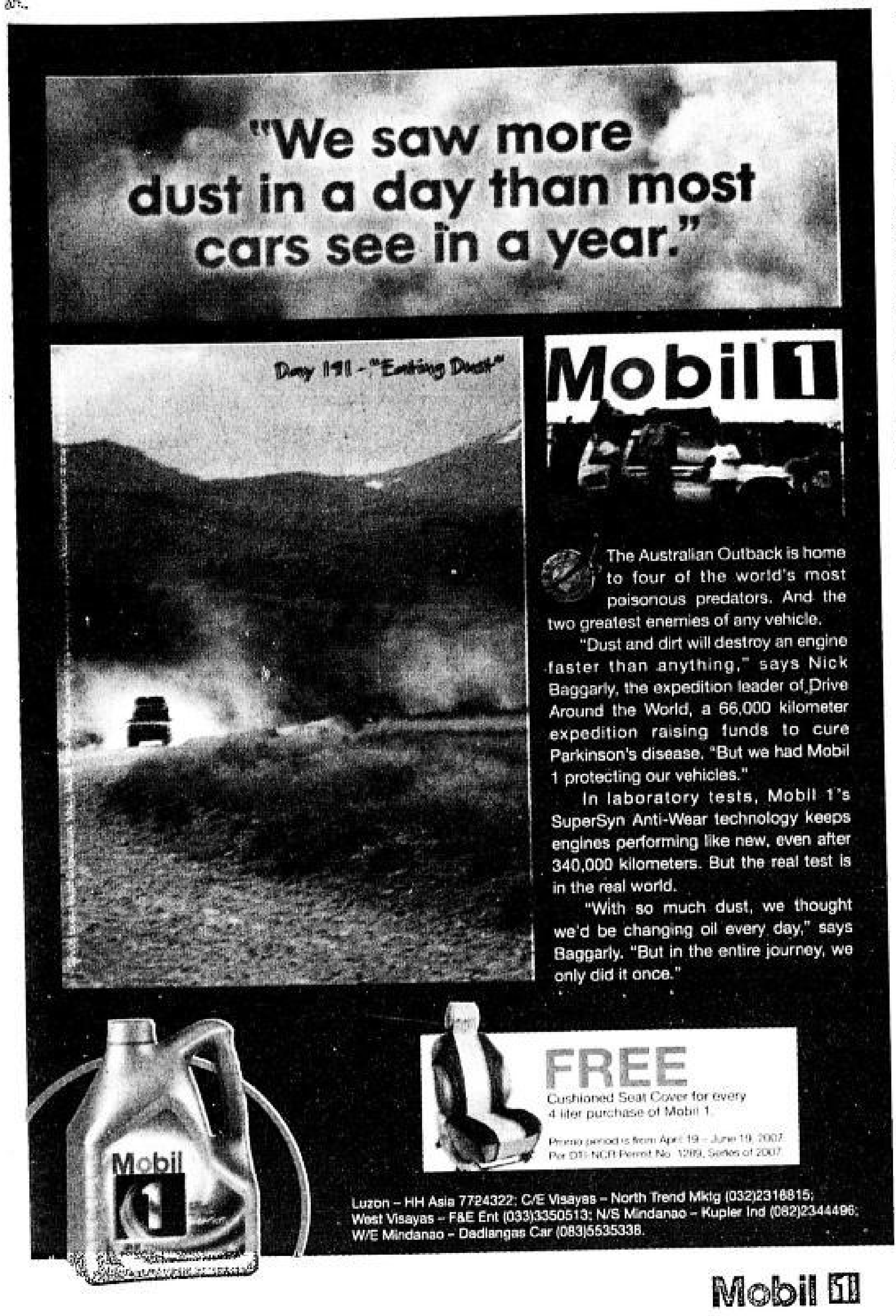
The study said organizational piracy, or the installation of one licensed software for an organization by several staff members, is the most prevalent form of piracy. It also showed that expanded access to the Internet in emerging markets is making piracy more convenient, which makes it all the more important to keep up anti-piracy efforts.

Jeffrey Hardee, BSA vice president and regional director for Asia, said that emerging economies such as the Philippines would do well to curb piracy because studies show that lower piracy rates lead to higher investments and more jobs.

"If you want to create more jobs in the IT industry and generate more revenue for business, bring down the rate of piracy," he said.

Hardee said one way for the Philippines to bring down piracy is for the government to discourage the use of person-to-person file-sharing in its own ranks, and to encourage PC distributors to bundle the computers they sell with licensed software.

"The study shows that when PCs shipped are already installed with licensed software, the tendency for the user to get pirated software decreases, and, without licensed software, the tendency for piracy goes up."



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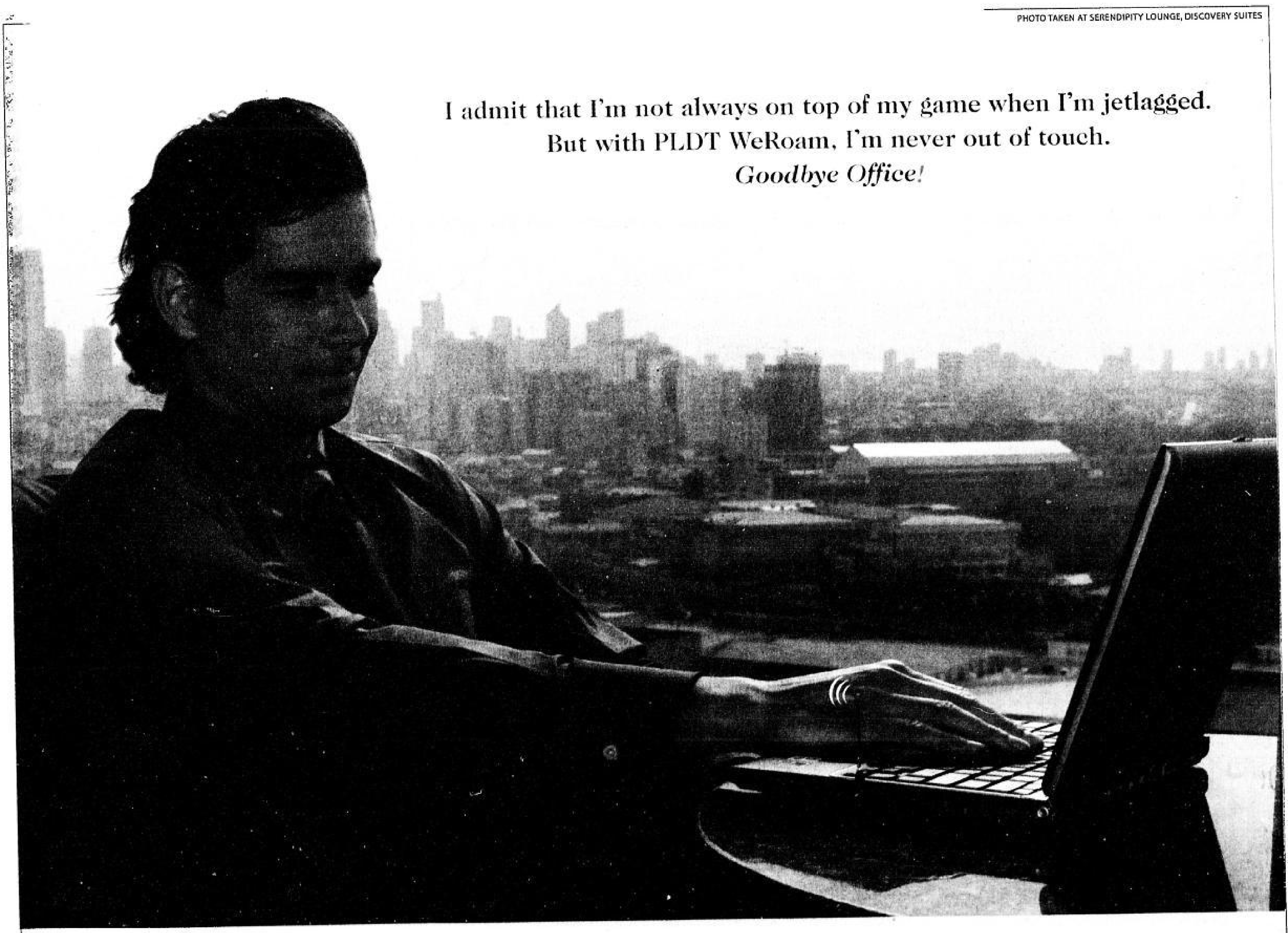

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Mommy dearest

The sad fact is, for a lot of people, the elections eclipsed Mother's Day. We at the 2bU! office were guilty of the same thing—because last week we chose to devote our pages to reminding you how important it is to make your vote count and choose the right people to put in office instead of paying tribute to the most important women in our lives. It's a shame because the truth is our moms deserve spotlight more than most of this year's candidates.

And so this week, with the circus over, we bring back the attention to our mothers. The lessons they taught us, how they are celebrated around the world, the ways we can pamper them and thank them for being the great influence that they are. Because we wouldn't be here if it weren't for them.

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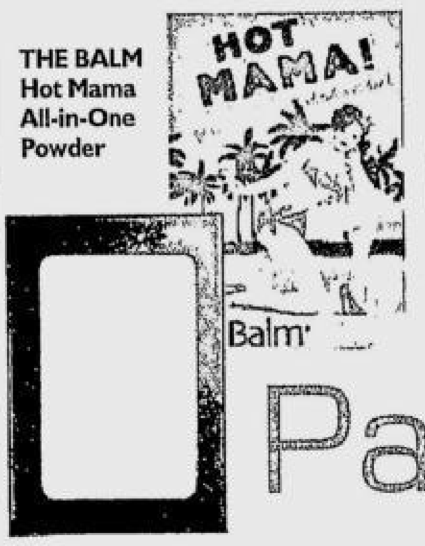

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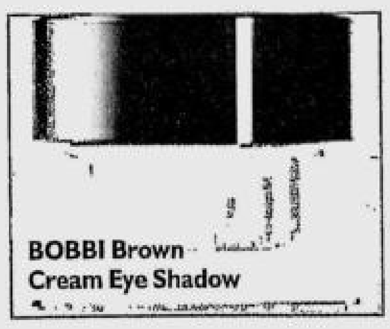
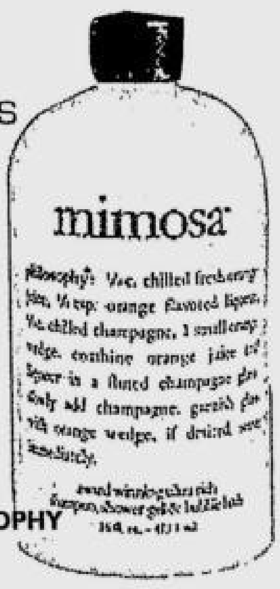
BOBBI Brown Pot Rouge

BOBBI BROWN



BOBBI Brown Cream Eye Shadow

There are hundreds of ways to say thanks to her even after Mother's Day



PHILOSOPHY 3-in-1

BOBBI Brown Tawny Shimmer Brick and Lip Kit

Pampering Mom

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

THERE'S NO REASON TO STOP treating your mom like a queen after Mother's Day.

With everyone crowding at the restaurants and spas last Sunday, giving your mom a post-Mother's Day treat might be even better than going all out on the day itself. That way, you'll have more time to relax and have long talks over lunch and spa treatments.

There's just no better way to help your mom chill out than to take her to the spa to have a massage or manicure-pedicure. Sofitel Philippine Plaza's spa, for instance, just introduced a new slimming massage that goes hand in hand with its almond body scrub and volcanic mud wrap.

The combined treatments help reduce water retention-caused bloat by making you sweat out toxins trapped in your body. For moms who usually have less time to exercise and pamper themselves, this treatment is the way to go. (And after a gut-busting lunch at Spiral, you'll definitely want to go for a slimming treatment afterwards).

If you have less time on your hands, a one-hour massage at the Ki Spa on Wilson Street, Greenhills, might be more suitable for you and your mom. Its sea-green interiors and soothing massages will provide her a refreshing breather from the home-and-work routine.

L'OREAL Revitalift

L'OREAL
REVITA

An alternative to spa treatments is to give your mom pampering products so she could look—and feel—good everyday. Home spa products are ideal for moms on the go, as they can use these products at their own pace and hour of need. Aromatherapy products such as bath gels, essential oils and lotions can instantly change a person's moods according to the scent. Some, like lavender, are relaxing, while citrus-based scents are invigorating.

For a new twist to aromatherapy, check out Philosophy's 3-in-1 body wash/shampoo/bubble bath. What we like about this line is that it goes beyond the usual scents and comes up with the most unusual combinations. Instead of plain mint, there's Mint Chocolate Chip Ice Cream, or Melon Daiquiri instead of melon.

We also love the great packaging—the recipes on the bottles of Philosophy products are real recipes that you can try at home.

RED Delicious Apple Body Scrub

apple
philosophy

The Red Delicious Apple Body Scrub smells like real apples, peel and all—not a generic chemical smell.

Hand treats

Moms end up doing the lion's share of the chores, which leads to rough, calloused hands. Give mom's hands a treat with Mediterranean Spa Hand Cream and Lip Balm duos, which come in lemon/orange and aloe vera.

If she needs a little more help, skin revitalizing products might be better. Check out Philosophy's Microdelivery Exfoliating Wash, or Glytone's Exfoliating Body Wash and Body Lotion Kit (the latter is especially good at getting rid of dead skin cells and chicken skin).

If your mom is conscious about facial skin problems, such as sagging skin and wrinkles, a good skincare product from you would definitely make her day.

While you can't do better than to give her the Obagi Nu-Derm system for skin renewal, you won't be able to afford it if you're still a student or on your first job. Instead, give her a bottle or two of cream. L'Oreal Revitalift Night, an anti-aging cream for wrinkles and sagging skin will do the job without breaking the bank.

KERASTASE Age Recharge

AGE RECHARGE

You can also check out Clarins' Truly Matte skincare range, which has pore minimizing and oil-control properties for younger moms who still have to worry about breakouts. We like its Pore Remodelling Serum and New Radiance Purifying Mask as well.

You can also opt to get your mom a rejuvenating facial. Belo Medical Group's Jetpeel and Obagi Oxygen facials are some of the clinic's most popular services because they unveil that coveted youthful glow in a matter of weeks. If she's into whitening, Dermclinic offers brightening facials and glutathione creams.

Makeup choices

If your mom's a makeup lover, there are a lot of new collections that will surely get her excited. Bobbi Brown has launched a new line of smudge and crease-proof eye shadows, while Smashbox recently unveiled its Sunset Boulevard summer collection. The collection showcases several golden-hued products such as bronzing powder, lipgloss, and powder.

But if you want to give her versatile items she can use every day, let her try mineral makeup, which promises to provide maximum coverage without breakouts, as other heavy foundations are prone to cause.

Try Skin Alison Raffaele mineral powder foundation, or Youngblood loose foundation. For blush, try Youngblood Crushed Mineral Blush in Sherbet, a peachy-pink shade. Another blush you might want to check out is the appropriately named Hot Mama multipurpose powder for the eyes, cheeks, and lips from The Balm.

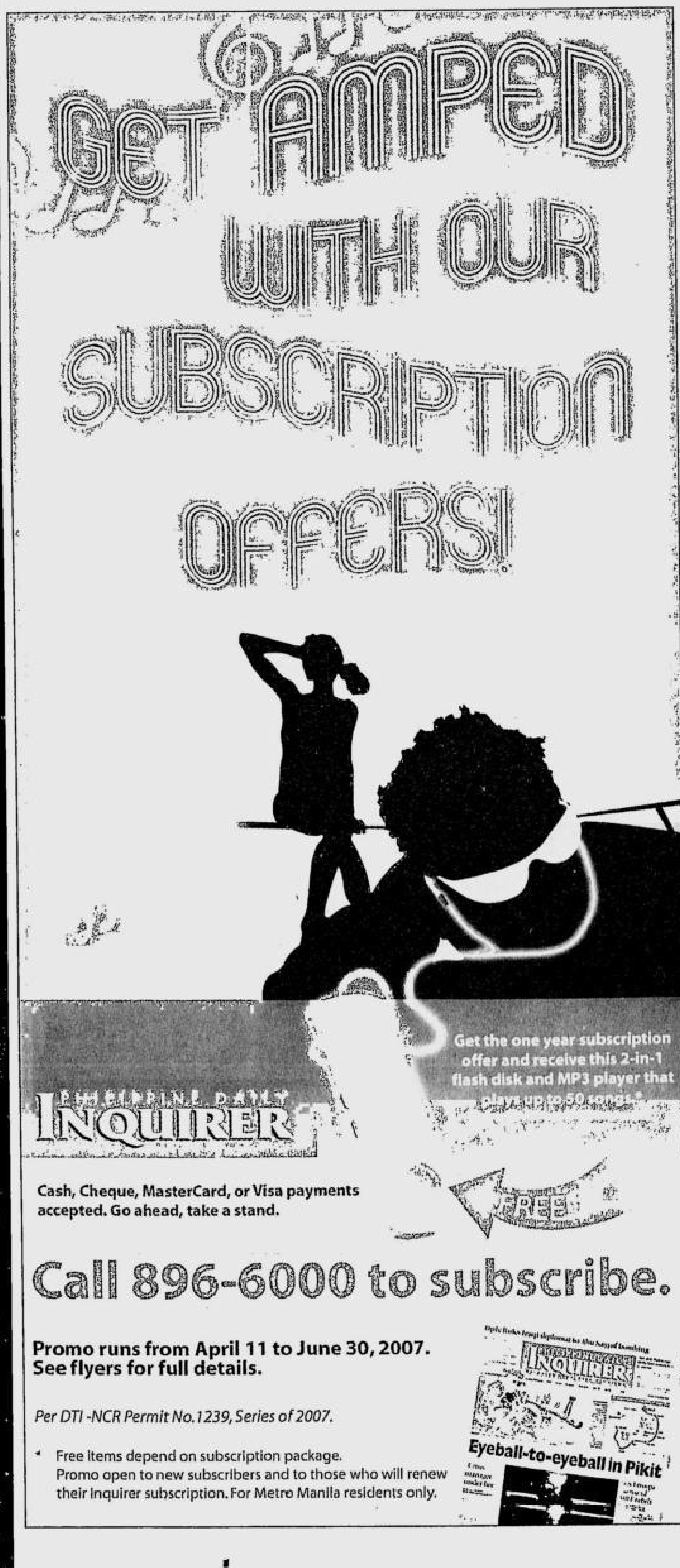
Moms on the go will also love the Bobbi Brown Tawny Shimmer Brick Kit, which contains a limited edition Shimmer Brick eyeshadow/blush and four lip colors in one compact.

A beauty treat for your mom won't be complete without hair treatments.

Check out Kerastase Age Recharge, a firming gel mask that promises to restore vitality to dry, limp hair. For young, hip moms, you can always get something from Tigi Bed Head to reaffirm her cool mom status. We like After Party anti-frizz cream and Curls Rock mousse, both of which define curly and wavy hairstyles without weighing them down.

There are definitely hundreds of ways to pamper your mom even after Mother's Day. Of course, beauty products won't be as good as a batch of homemade cookies made by you (no matter how botched your attempts are), but they're a way of thanking her every day.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com.



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HEALTH buffs will [illegible] Mango Papaya Salad

SPICY Shrimp Scampi

TOMATO and Herb Pasta

BESTSELLER Vigan Longganisa sandwich

Made with a mother's touch

By Angela V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent

Warm and inviting, Café Mary Grace has all the comforts of home

OKAY, YOU'VE TOTALLY RUN out of ideas on what to give your mom for Mother's Day so you've decided to take her out on a "date" instead. You're excited to unwind and do some major catching up with the most important person in your life (aside from your dad), since you were both too busy to spend time with each other for the last few months.

The question is, where?

2bU! has spotted the perfect place to do just that. Warm and inviting, Café Mary Grace in Serendra is a cozy little nook that has all the comforts of home, except that your mom doesn't have to cook or clean up afterwards.

Home-style cooking

From the heavenly home-style cooking down to the dainty crocheted coasters, everything in the café feels like it's been made with a mother's loving touch. That's because the owner herself is a mom of five.

"The café was my son Gabby's idea," says Mary Grace Dimacali, fondly called Tita Grace by friends and family. "We wanted to put up a café where everyone could be at home and get their comfort food—not just sweets but also light meals at affordable prices."

Looking at the menu, you'll see that the food items are also proudly Filipino. Most of the recipes are Dimacali's very own.

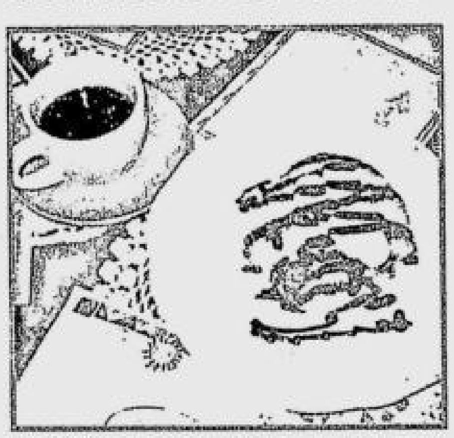
If your mom has a sweet tooth, we strongly recommend the bestselling ensaymada with Mary Grace hot chocolate, an irresistible combo that spells detox with a capital D.

There are three jazzed-up ensaymada variants: Banana Chocolate, Cinnamon Apple and Caramel Sauce with Toasted Casuy, all of which go from heavenly to positively sinful when dipped in the hot choco.

Aside from the ever-popular cheese rolls, treat your mom to a sampler of the different kinds of "square sweets" such as lemon squares and brownies.

Healthy dishes

Moms who are strictly on weight-watching duty need not feel guilty about ordering anything they like, as almost everything on the menu is actually healthy or low-cholesterol. In fact, the cafe uses only virgin olive oil for all its dishes.



CAFÉ Mary Grace's dynamic duo: hot choco and banana chocolate ensaymada. Careful, they're highly addictive.

If you're looking for something to tickle your taste buds without betraying your diet, we recommend the Spicy Shrimp Scampi, a tangy pasta dish that's absolutely meat-free. Other must-trys are the Kesong Puti on freshly baked bread, Tomato and Herb Pasta, Mango and Papaya Salad, Chicken Caesar Salad and the popular Vigan Longganisa sandwich, which comes with homemade potato chips. The last dish doesn't exactly fit the "healthy living" category, but hey, your mom needs to indulge herself once in a while, too.

KESONG puti appetizer with freshly baked bread

GRACIOUS hostess. Tita Grace welcomes you to the cozy café with a smile.

If she loves herbal tea, have her try the café's house blends, as they are definitely out of the ordinary. No sugar or sweeteners here, just honey and all-natural tea flavors. Choose from exotic flavors like Apple and Cinnamon Honey, Peppermint and Fruits, Hibiscus and Sangria.

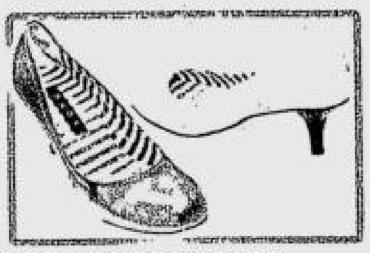
To cap off the date, you and your mom can write your comments on a piece of paper, to be displayed underneath the table glass for everyone to see. Nothing like a personal dedication to the café's own "mom" to commemorate the occasion. After all, at Café Mary Grace, everyday is Mother's Day.

Café Mary Grace is open from Mondays to Thursdays at 11 a.m.-11 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 11 a.m.-12 mn, and Sundays at 12 nn-11 p.m.

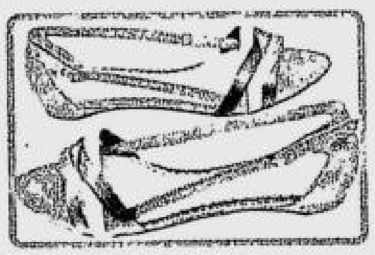
E-mail the author at aoshi_no_miko@atenista.net.

GREEN is one of the season's hot colors. P1699

PATTERNED PRINCESS. P1799



STAR IN STRIPES. P1599



TOOTSIE TREAT. P1599

METAL MAMA. P1599

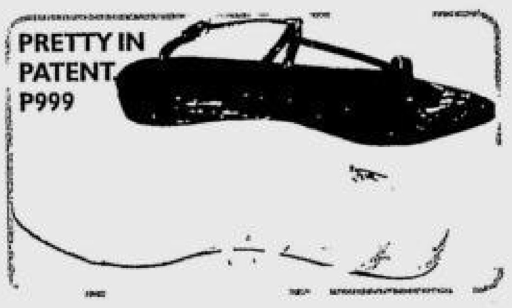
TIED UP. P999

Soles for the tired mother's soul

HOT ITEM. One of the favorites from this collection, P1799

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Rudy Esperas

SEXY SANDALS. P1699



PRETTY IN PATENT. P999

Walking in mom's shoes isn't easy—so she deserves a spankin' new pair or two

WITH HER MANY ROLES AND seemingly endless responsibilities, there's no doubt our moms feel like they have big, giant shoes to fill most of the time.

And because we won't know what it's like to walk in their shoes until our own turn at motherhood sneaks up on us, the least we can do is try to make things a little easier on them.

And we mean not just on Mother's Day.

Help out at home, pamper her, kidnap her from the kitchen and take her to a nice resto, even buy her new shoes to add a spring to her step.

Remember how she patiently helped you find the perfect pair of black leather shoes at the start of each school year. And how she walked around the mall for hours in search of your first pair of heels. And how, when no pair seemed to make your prom outfit complete, she had satin shoes dyed to match the shade of your dress.

Remember these things when you are searching for the perfect pair for your mom. Unless your mom really has a penchant for high heels, it might be wiser to stick to flats, to shoes she can wear all day as she runs around your house and the rest of the city, crossing out item after item on her endless to-do list.

Schu owner Ruby Gan gave tips on picking the right shoes for your mom. "Color is a key point. If your mom is trendy, go for the trendy colors of the season—mustard, purple, electric blue, green. Or if she's not into color, go for embellishments, the little details that make a difference."

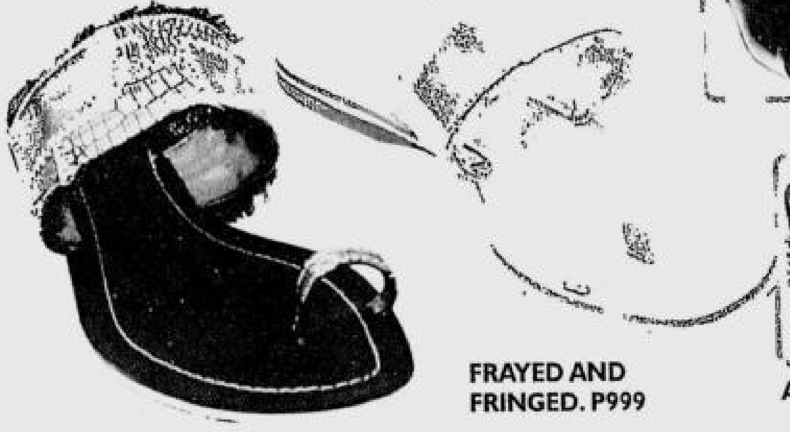
When she says embellishments, she means bling, metallic touches, mixes of patterns and textures, frayed edges, studs and printed insteps.

Schu's latest collection features a good mix of color and interesting details that you—and mom—might love.

It is a wonderful role reversal—when you reach that point where you can do for mom what she used to do for you, whether it's shoe-shopping or just making sure she knows you're always on and at her side.

Schu has branches at Glorietta 3, Megamall, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Robinsons Galleria, Mall of Asia and Chimes, Felcris Specialty Store in Davao. Schu will also open in the Ayala Trinoma Mall and Ayala Cebu soon. Visit the Schu blogs at http://schushop.multiply.com, http://schushop.blogspot.com and http://schushop.spaces.msn.com.

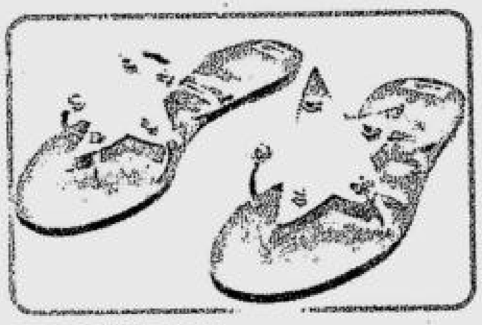
BOW BEAUTY. P1499



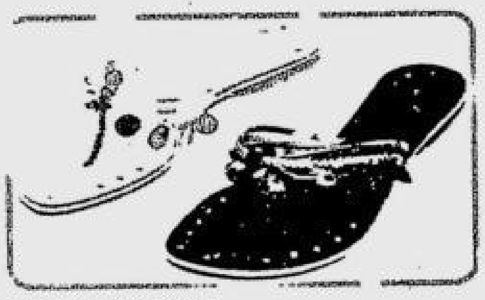
FRAYED AND FRINGED. P999

ANIMAL TOUCH. P1399

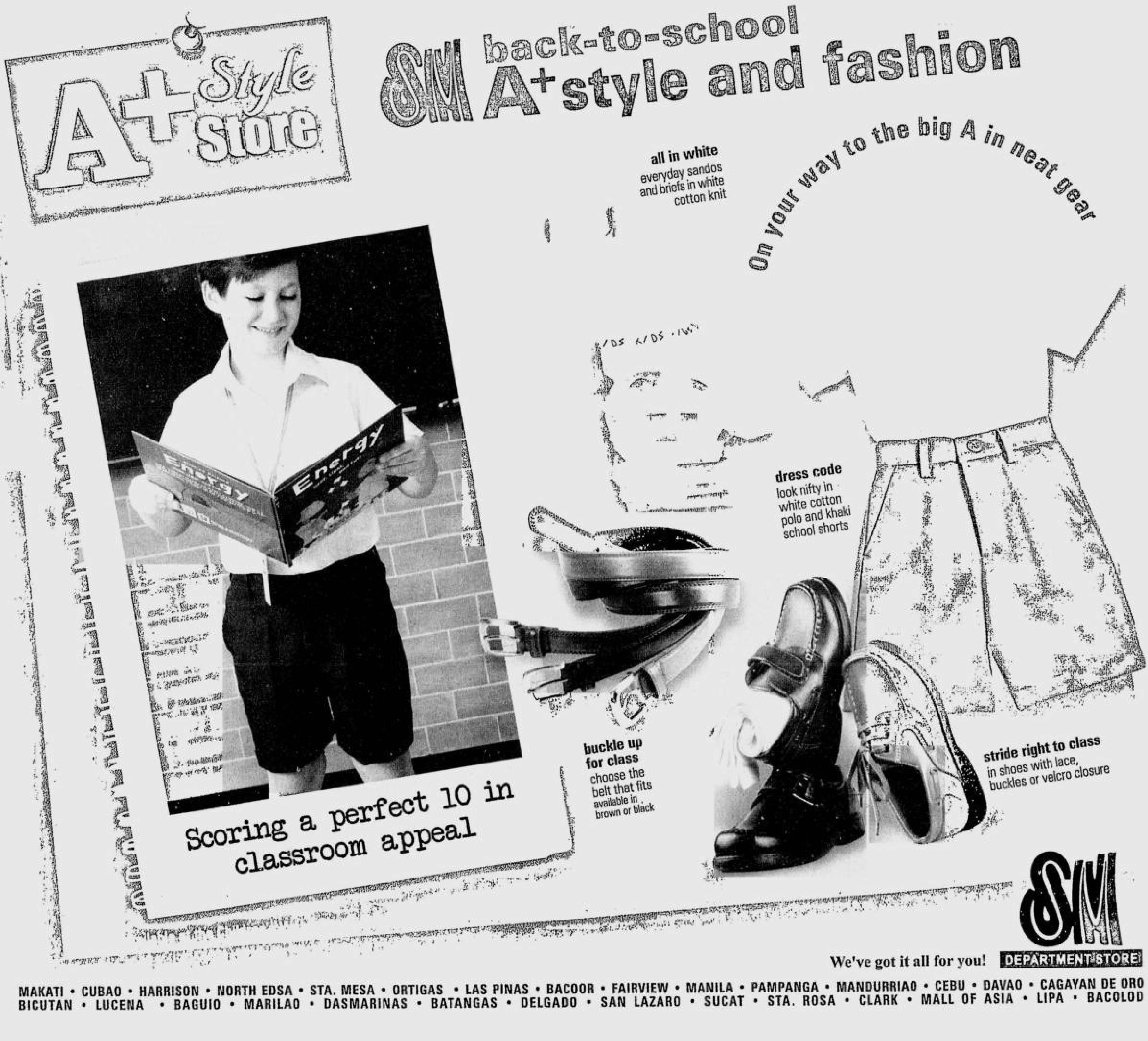
NOT YOUR usual sneakers. P1599



SUPER STAR. P999



CHARM ME. P999



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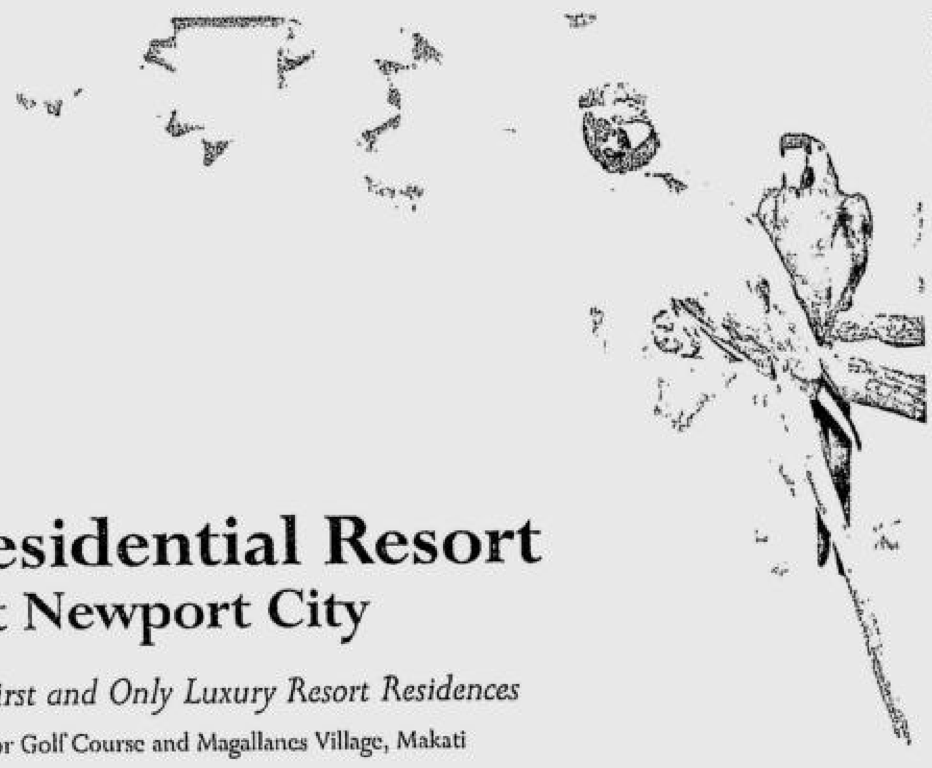

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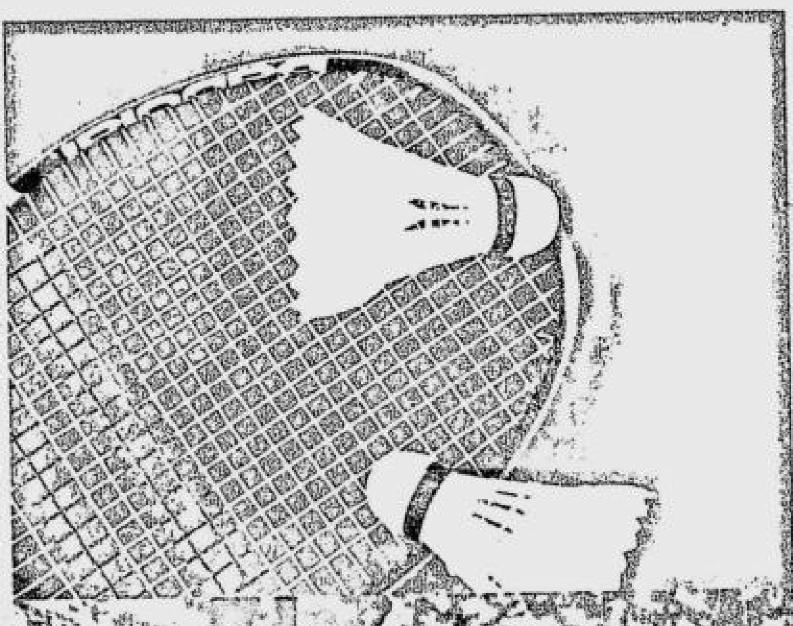

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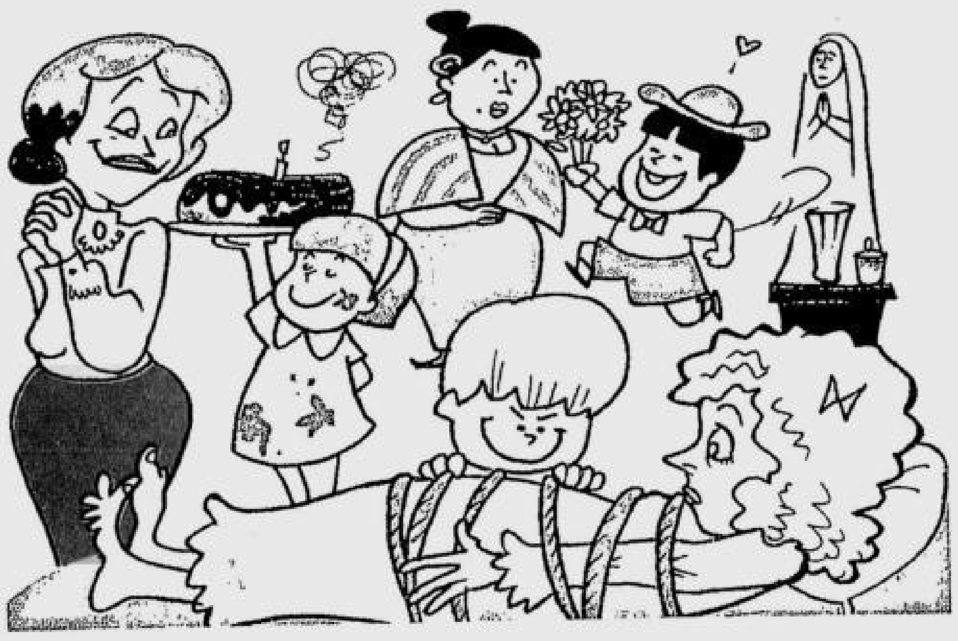

How do other countries and cultures celebrate this heartwarming occasion?

Moms' Day around the world

By Brian Keith Santos
2bU! Correspondent

THE GREEKS WERE AMONG the first people to celebrate Mother's Day. It was originally an annual spring festival dedicated to the Mother of Gods, Rhea.

Mothers would have a lavish offering of honey cakes, wine and flowers, similar to what we call today as breakfast-in-bed.

Today, Mothers' day is celebrated in different ways in over 40 countries around the world.

Here's how some of them usually celebrate this tradition:

USA. Americans celebrate this holiday pretty

MOMS'/D3

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Date	Event	Venue
May 19	Boardmax Advertising Mini Fashion Show	3/L, Tiangge
	Stilt Walker	Finds Entrance (Canopy)
May 20	Little Miss Jollibee Finals	Activity Area
	Pantomime	Finds Entrance (Canopy)
May 26	Star Babes Finals	Activity Area
	Stilt Walker	Finds Entrance (Canopy)
May 27	Maneuvers Dance Mall Tour	Activity Area
	Pantomime	Finds Entrance (Canopy)
May 31	Summer Dress Up Your Store Awarding	Activity Area

Tuesdays: Comedy Nights at Cuba Libre, 9pm • Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays: Live Band at Cuba Libre, 9pm

METROPOLIS ALABANG STAR
Tel. No. 842-2513

Date	Event	Venue
May 19	Mark Bautista Album Tour	2/L, Activity Center
May 20	VIVA Hot Babes Sheree and Jennifer Lee Mall Tour	2/L, Activity Center
May 23	Heat Wave '07 A Summer Bikini Showdown	4/L, Garden Resort
May 24	Trabaho Tour Philippines	3/L, Home Center
May 25	Trabaho Tour Philippines	3/L, Home Center
May 26	Little Pop Star Grand Finals	3/L, Home Center
May 27	Ate Shawie Comedy Mall Tour (with Summer Display Contest Awarding)	3/L, Home Center

Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays: Live Band at Mark's Bar

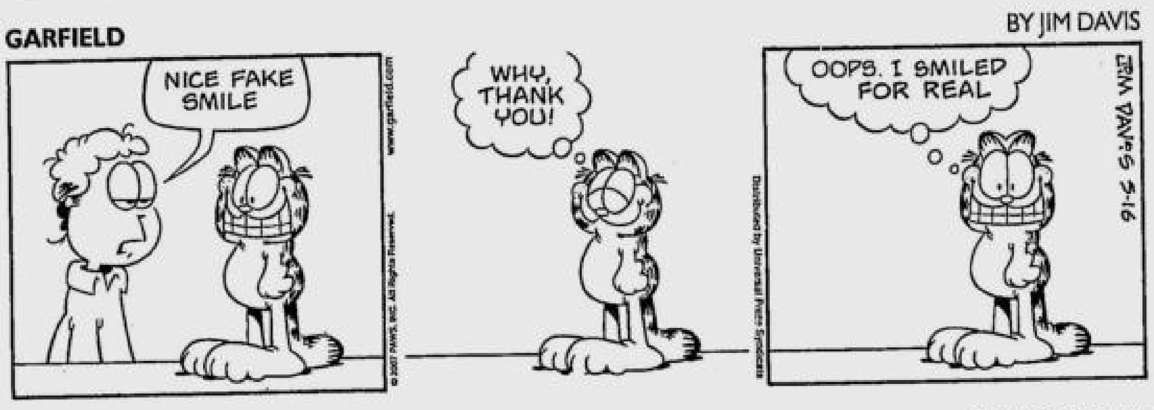
starmall LAS PIÑAS
Tel. No. 872-5249

Date	Event	Venue
May 19	Nasaan Na Si Hesus? Musical Play	Activity Hub
May 26	Grand Opening of Cuba Libre featuring Reggae Nights	Activity Hub
May 27	Little Miss Las Piñas 2007	Activity Hub
May 31	Rock-aholic Battle of the Bands by De La Salle University	Activity Hub

Wednesdays: Live Music at The Strip
Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays: Live Band at Cuba Libre

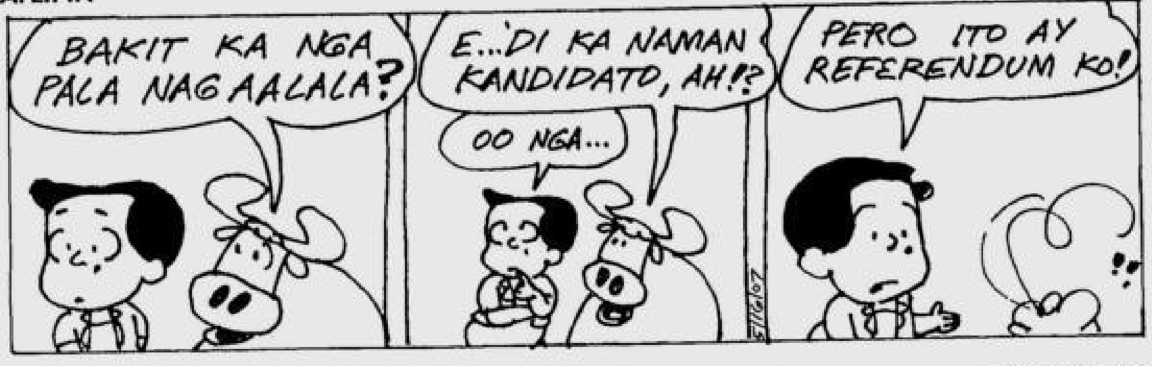
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


NICE FAKE SMILE
WHY, THANK YOU!
OOPS. I SMILED FOR REAL
JIM DAVIS 5-16

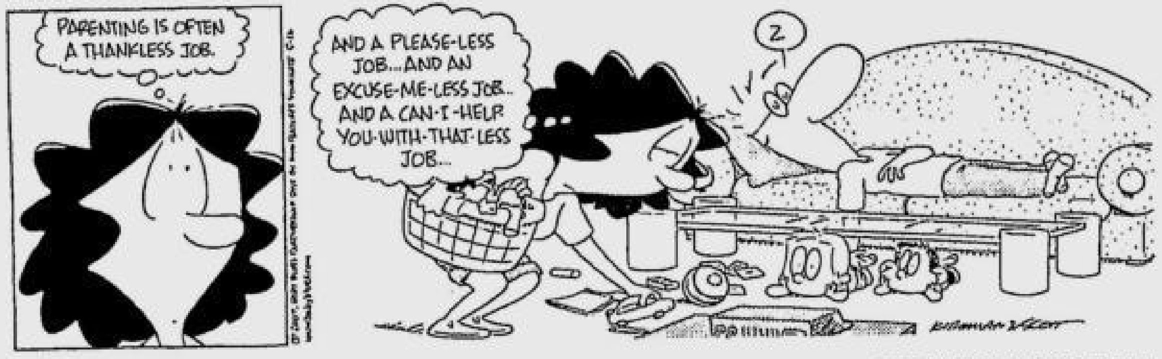
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BAKIT KA NGA PALA NAG AALALA?
E...DI KA NAMAN KANDIDATO, AH!?
OO NGA...
PERO ITO AY REFERENDUM KO!

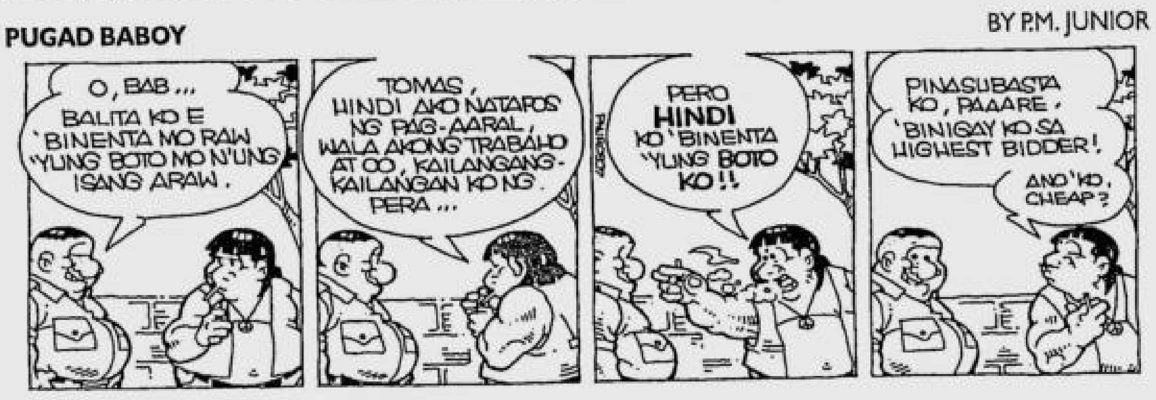
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


PARENTING IS OFTEN A THANKLESS JOB.
AND A PLEASE-LESS JOB...AND AN EXCUSE-ME-LESS JOB.. AND A CAN-I-HELP YOU-WITH-THAT-LESS JOB...
Z

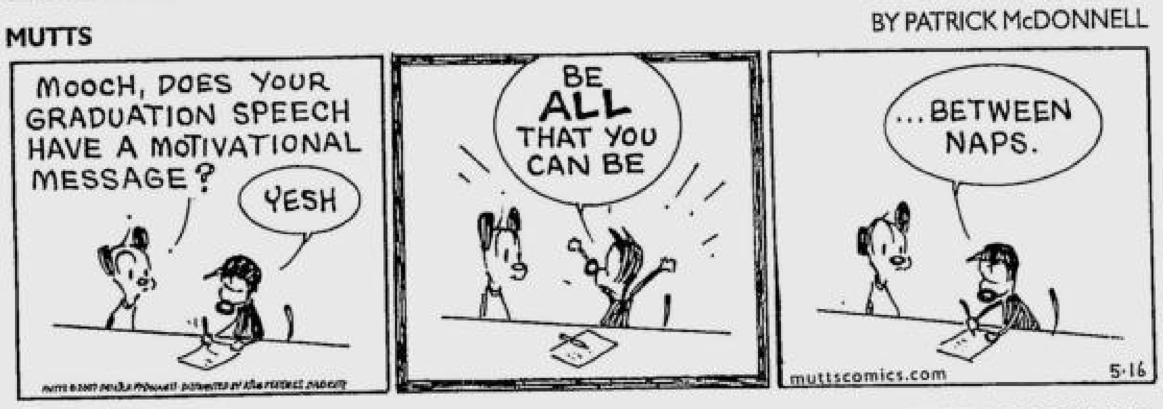
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


O, BAB... BALITA KO E 'BINENTA MO RAW 'YUNG BOTO MO N'UNG ISANG ARAW.
TOMAS, HINDI AKO NATAPOS NG PAG-AARAL, WALA AKONG TRABAHO AT OO, KAILANGANG-KAILANGAN KO NG PERA...
PERO HINDI KO 'BINENTA 'YUNG BOTO KO!!
PINASUBASTA KO, PAAARE. 'BINIGAY KO SA HIGHEST BIDDER!.
ANO 'KO, CHEAP?

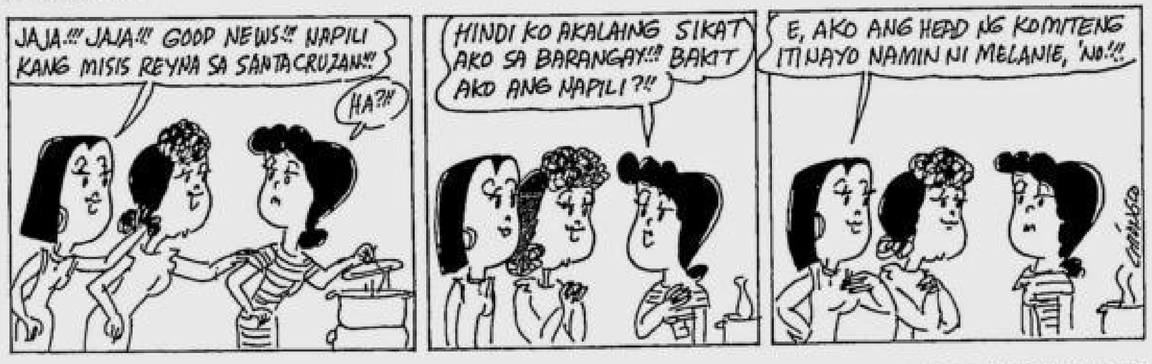
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH, DOES YOUR GRADUATION SPEECH HAVE A MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGE?
YESH
BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE
...BETWEEN NAPS.
muttscomics.com
5-16

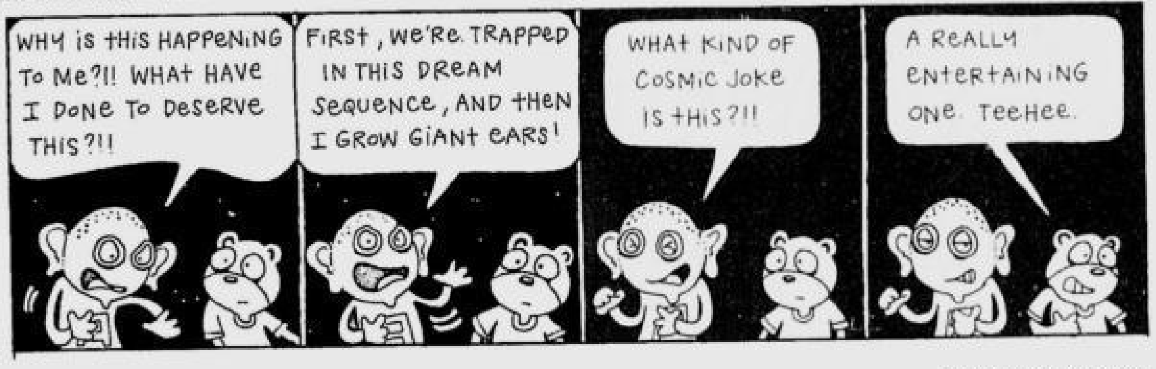
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA!!! JAJA!!! GOOD NEWS!!! NAPILI KANG MISIS REYNA SA SANTACRUZAN!!!
HA?!!
HINDI KO AKALAING SIKAT AKO SA BARANGAY!!! BAKIT AKO ANG NAPILI?!!
E, AKO ANG HEAD NG KOMITENG ITINAYO NAMIN NI MELANIE, 'NO!!!

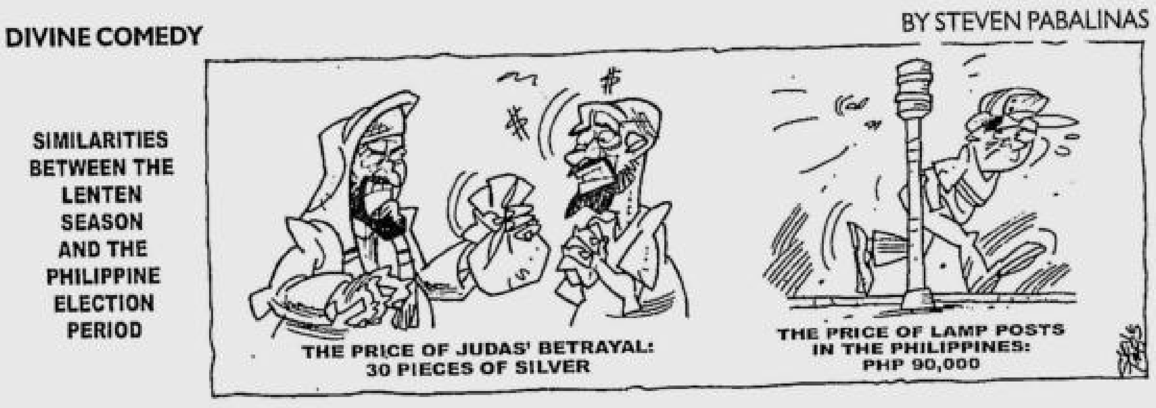
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHY IS THIS HAPPENING TO ME?!! WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE THIS?!!
FIRST, WE'RE TRAPPED IN THIS DREAM SEQUENCE, AND THEN I GROW GIANT EARS!
WHAT KIND OF COSMIC JOKE IS THIS?!!
A REALLY ENTERTAINING ONE. TEEHEE.

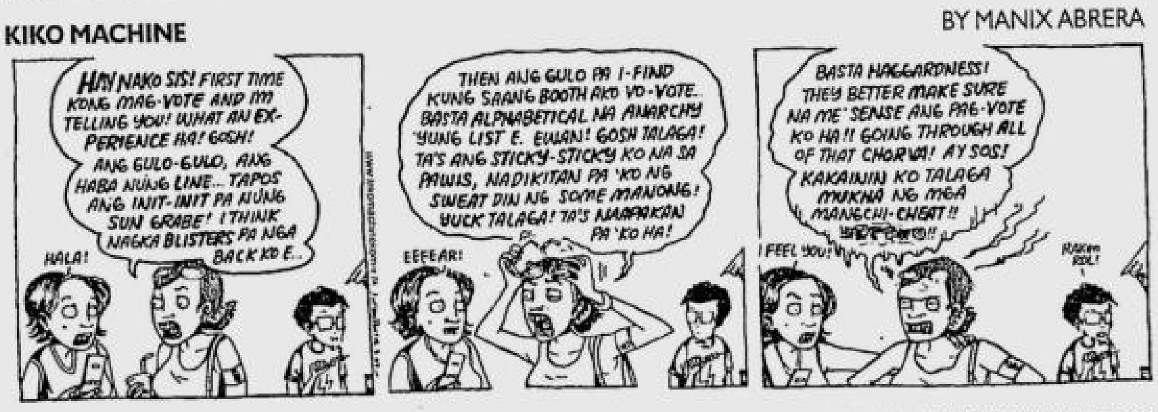
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE LENTEN SEASON AND THE PHILIPPINE ELECTION PERIOD
THE PRICE OF JUDAS' BETRAYAL: 30 PIECES OF SILVER
THE PRICE OF LAMP POSTS IN THE PHILIPPINES: PHP 90,000

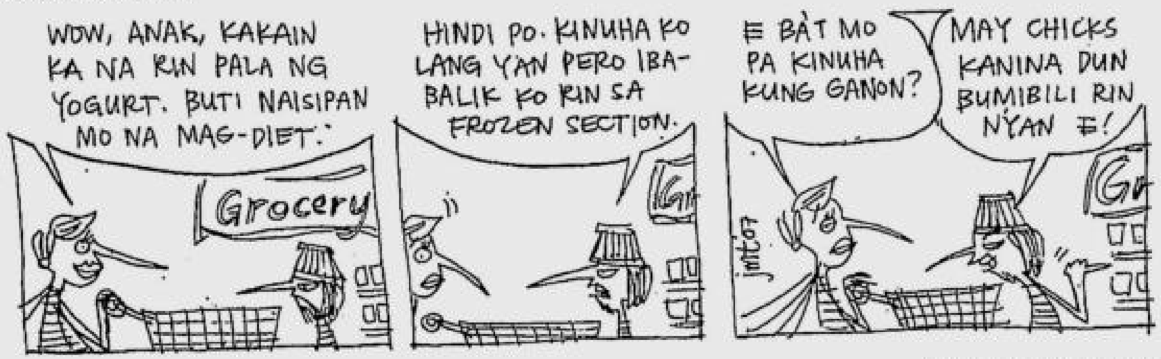
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HAY NAKO SIS! FIRST TIME KONG MAG-VOTE AND I'M TELLING YOU! WHAT AN EXPERIENCE HA! GOSH! ANG GULO-GULO, ANG HABA NUNG LINE... TAPOS ANG INIT-INIT PA NUNG SUN GRABE! I THINK NAGKA BLISTERS PA NGA BACK KO E...
HALA!
THEN ANG GULO PA I-FIND KUNG SAANG BOOTH AKO VO-VOTE.. BASTA ALPHABETICAL NA ANARCHY 'YUNG LIST E. EWAN! GOSH TALAGA! TA'S ANG STICKY-STICKY KO NA SA PAWIS, NADIKITAN PA 'KO NG SWEAT DIN NG SOME MANONG! YUCK TALAGA! TA'S NAAPAKAN PA 'KO HA!
EEEEAR!
BASTA HAGGARDNESS! THEY BETTER MAKE SURE NA ME' SENSE ANG PAG-VOTE KO HA!! GOING THROUGH ALL OF THAT CHORVA! AY SOS! KAKAININ KO TALAGA MUKHA NG MGA MANGCHI-CHEAT!!
I FEEL YOU!
RAKEN ROL!

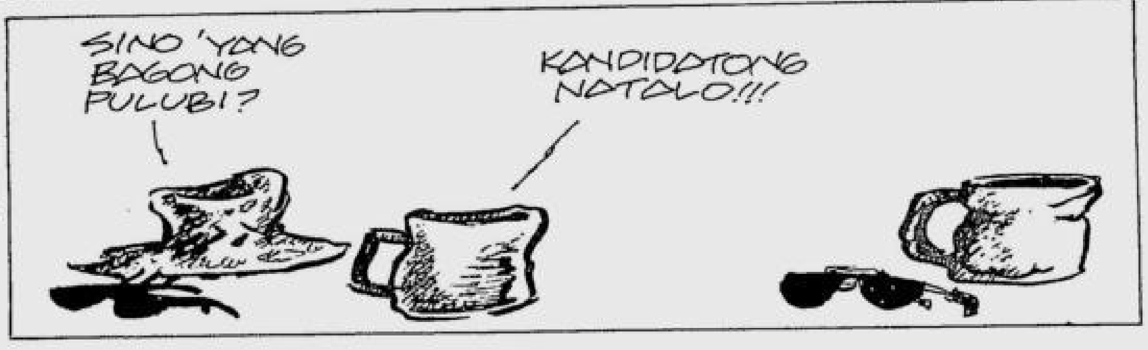
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


WOW, ANAK, KAKAIN KA NA RIN PALA NG YOGURT. BUTI NAISIPAN MO NA MAG-DIET.
Grocery
HINDI PO. KINUHA KO LANG YAN PERO IBA-BALIK KO RIN SA FROZEN SECTION.
E BAT MO PA KINUHA KUNG GANON?
MAY CHICKS KANINA DUN BUMIBILI RIN NYAN E!

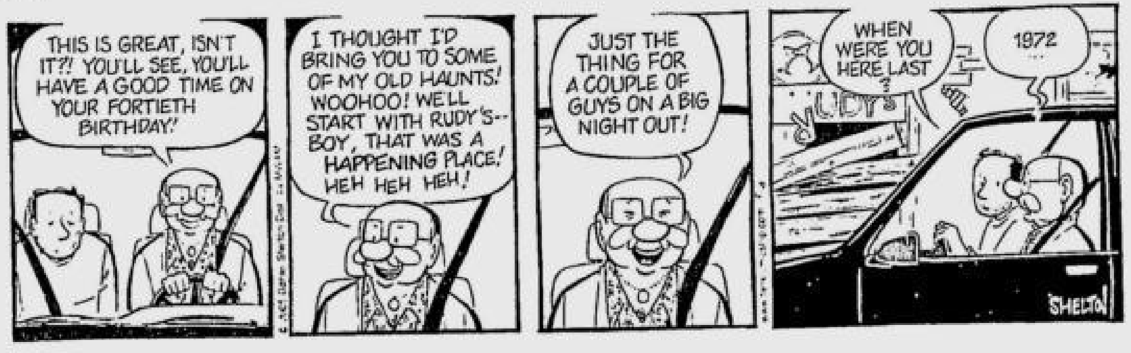
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SINO 'YONG BAGONG PULUBI?
KANDIDATONG NATALO!!!

BEN

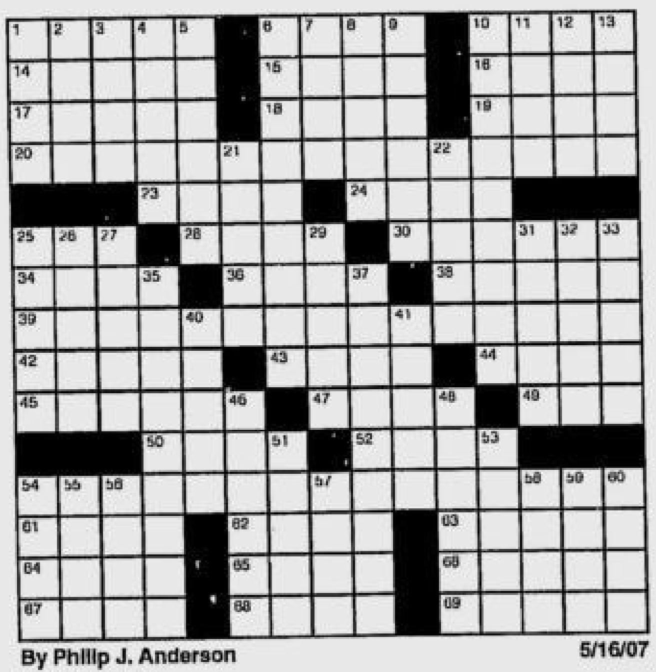
BY DANIEL SHELTON


THIS IS GREAT, ISN'T IT?! YOU'LL SEE, YOU'LL HAVE A GOOD TIME ON YOUR FORTIETH BIRTHDAY!
I THOUGHT I'D BRING YOU TO SOME OF MY OLD HAUNTS! WOOHOO! WE'LL START WITH RUDY'S-- BOY, THAT WAS A HAPPENING PLACE! HEH HEH HEH!
JUST THE THING FOR A COUPLE OF GUYS ON A BIG NIGHT OUT!
WHEN WERE YOU HERE LAST?
1972
RUDY'S
SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Hindu social stratum
6 Freebie
10 Strike a stance
14 Pallid
15 Redolence
16 State with conviction
17 Is inclined
18 "Star Wars" princess
19 Olin of "The Ninth Gate"
20 Collectible Edsels?
23 Nerve bundle
24 Five in the NBA
25 Young fellow
28 Dial or Dove
30 Work shifts
34 Quickly, initially
36 Turkish leaders
38 Symbol of slowness
39 Tiny bit of pasta?
42 First Vice President
43 Morales of "La Bamba"
44 Cyberspace place
45 Put up a struggle
47 Cicero's being
49 Invite
50 Architect Saarinen
52 Coop layers
54 Placebo?
61 Subtle clue
62 Coffin cover
63 Ancient Greek colony
64 Regarding
65 Romance lang.
66 Severity
67 Old classic cars
68 Socialist Eugene V.
69 Dementieva of tennis

DOWN
1 Veal source
2 Aboard ship
3 Spurious imitation
4 Male voice
5 Follows
6 Professional associate
7 Theatres in old Rome
8 Damp
9 Chatters
10 Golden horses
11 Ended
12 Broadcast
13 Historic periods
21 Brown ermine
22 Butterball
25 Truman's birthplace
26 Words to an audience
27 Carvey and Andrews
29 Take a sentence apart
31 Gymnast Comaneci
32 Leans
33 Glossy
35 Olive tidbits
37 Beach souvenirs
40 Selling point
41 First generation Japanese-American
46 Timorous
48 Whole
51 Emulate Demosthenes
53 Go bad
54 Burn slightly
55 Seine tributary
56 Commandment word
57 Loose fat
58 "Picnic" playwright
59 Detroit pro
60 Flynn Boyle of Hollywood



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
5/16/07

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

S	H	R	U	B	■	G	Y	M	■	S	C	O	T	T
L	I	A	N	A	■	H	E	R	■	H	O	N	E	R
U	N	T	I	L	■	O	A	R	■	E	N	E	M	Y
E	D	I	T	O	R	S	H	I	P	■	S	U	P	S
D	U	O	■	N	U	T	■	G	O	T	O	P	O	T
■	■	■	R	E	N	E	■	H	E	I	R	■	■	■
M	O	S	E	Y	E	D	■	T	S	E	T	S	E	S
A	N	I	S	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	I	O	W	A
P	O	N	T	I	A	C	■	T	R	E	N	D	E	D
■	■	■	O	S	S	A	■	W	I	N	G	■	■	■
T	E	A	R	S	A	T	■	O	C	T	■	E	M	U
A	L	M	A	■	P	A	S	T	O	R	A	L	E	S
B	L	A	B	S	■	L	E	I	■	A	G	I	L	E
L	I	S	L	E	■	P	A	M	■	N	A	D	E	R
E	S	S	E	X	■	A	R	E	■	T	R	E	E	S

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5/16/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a colorful charm that others find appealing. You're not afraid to express your emotions. Many of you are, in fact, eccentric. You like to dress well; you are always aware of the impression you create on your audience. You're very kind and affectionate to loved ones. You will likely face an important choice this year; choose wisely. **Birthdate of:** Pierce Brosnan, actor; David Boreanaz, actor; Debra Winger, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today is a good day to assess how you handle money. Can you improve your spending habits? What about your savings? (Groan.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Today the New Moon is in your sign. This is the perfect time to take a good look in the mirror and check out your image. Do you like what you see?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): In your busy, helter-skelter world, it's easy to ignore your spiritual life. But this side is important too. Think about what you can do to get more in touch with your quiet, inner being.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This might be one of the best days all year for you to think about friendships. Your friends influence your future because they affect your mind and, hence, your choices. Do you hang out with quality people?

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Examine your attitude toward authority figures—especially parents, teachers and your boss. Part of growing up is accepting authority when necessary. (You can't avoid it.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): What are you doing to learn new things or to travel to places you've never been to before? It's good to constantly expand your experience of the world.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a good day to take stock of taxes, debt and shared property. Try to tie up loose details in these areas. (Boring, I know.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Today's New Moon is totally opposite your sign. This offers you a chance to observe your style of relating to those who are closest to you. (Take a peek.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is the perfect day to observe your style of working and relating to co-workers. What can you do to improve in both these areas?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's important to balance fun and pleasure with work. Too much of either will give you an imbalanced life. Are you having enough fun in relation to the amount of work you do?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): George Burns said, "Happiness is having a loving, warm, caring family in another city." Kidding aside, how can you improve your family relationships?

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Relationships with everyone depend on clear communication. Think about how you communicate to friends and loved ones. Do they understand you? Do you listen to them?

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		1		8		4		
	8		6		4		7	
	4						3	
		8	3	4	6	5		
			9		5			
			8		1			
	6	3				9	2	
5								8
	7	4	5	9	8	1	6	

Difficulty Level ★★★
5/16

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	6	7	5	4	3	2	1	8
5	1	4	6	2	8	7	3	9
3	8	2	7	1	9	5	4	6
6	9	8	4	3	7	1	5	2
2	3	1	8	6	5	4	9	7
4	7	5	2	9	1	8	6	3
1	4	6	9	8	2	3	7	5
7	2	9	3	5	4	6	8	1
8	5	3	1	7	6	9	2	4

Difficulty Level ★★

2bU! Survey What's the greatest lesson your mom has taught you?

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

AS KIDS, OUR mothers regularly reminded us of many things. That looking to our left and right before crossing the street is advisable. That reading is a very good thing because it makes us intelligent. That drinking that glass of boring milk or eating those yucky greens will do the body good.

Now that we've grown up, our mothers continue to supply us with valuable lessons we do need to lead good lives: Don't drink too much. Stop seeing that person. Don't do anything stupid. Stop smoking. Sleep early.

Below are several other mother lines and lessons that we all know and should probably listen to more often.

The greatest lesson my mom has taught me is to know the difference between right and wrong. – **Einar Ingebrigtsen, 23**

A few words from my mom (Perlas Sandel, 49) that I always keep in mind: just don't do it again. Works for me! – **Aubrey Miles, 27**

My mum says "it matters not how painful the fall. It's the getting up and moving on that matters most." – **Nikki Gil**

To always trust her. Mothers will never leave their children and will never put them in trouble. – **Pauleen Luna**

One of the best lessons I learned from my mom is that it's possible to leave a 6-year-old in National Bookstore for an hour without traumatizing or inflicting permanent mental damage (well, relatively) on the kid. And, taking pills is the answer to almost everything under the sun. Like, everything. – **Jacs Sampayan, 25**

Mom taught me the first commandment, Matthew 22:37. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." – **Anne, 27**

Have fun living your life. Just don't regret anything once you wake up in the morning. – **Jet Dayola, 29**

It doesn't matter what other people think as long as you do what you know is right. – **Michael Karlo Lim, 24**

Never go home crying. Hit back. Get even. – **Achilles Espejo**

There are a lot of important lessons I learned from my mom (Liezel, 40), but the most important thing would have to be putting my complete trust in God always and for everything. He always has a reason for why we go through the things we go through, and we just have to have complete faith that He will get us through every trial and challenge in life. I should see these challenges and trials as ways to build and strengthen my character and faith. Oh, and another lesson: use sunblock daily to avoid freckles and skin cancer. – **Alyanna Martinez, 21**

One thing my mom never failed to keep reminding us while growing up was to never stop believing. That's how to achieve all your dreams in life, she'd say. You have to believe. I was 6 years old when she first told me that. I was being hardheaded and kept asking, if that's true, how come I can't fly right now? She simply replied: you have to believe more. I'm 24 years old now, and I still believe that, someday, if we believe it hard enough, we'd be able to fly. – **Raf Rosell IV**

If you are at the lowest point of your life, don't let it get you. Just enjoy it. You will go there only once. – **Luke Jickain**

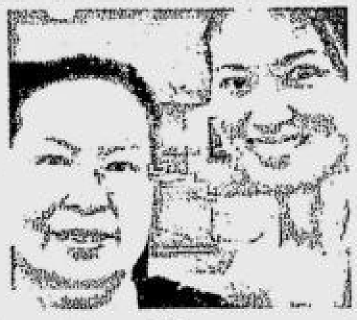
E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

My mom taught me to be God-fearing. She also told us that no one was too rich that He couldn't receive, and no one too poor that He couldn't give. Everyone has something to share, be it time, talent or treasure. By example, I have seen her share those 3T's in church, with friends (even strangers) and most especially with us, her family. She also taught us the values of forgiveness, and that we should give people allowances, because no one is perfect. – **Tracey Gonzales, 23**

Probably the best things I learned from my mom: how to love unconditionally, how to be practical in all things, and how to make the best chocolate cake ever! – **Vekka Nadua, 26**

The greatest lesson my mom taught me was actually never uttered in words. She showed us the simple virtue of being patient, hardworking, and most of all having fun in life. I've seen her hard work in taking care of us four while handling the family business. Being a mom and a businesswoman isn't easy, especially with my dad suffering from a stroke for more than 20 years. She'd tell us that everything was okay, when apparently things were not. She'd tell us we had nothing to worry about and we'd believe her (who wouldn't when she had this smile that convinced us all the time?). And she never complained. During tough times, she still managed to laugh at all her problems and have fun by doing her favorite things, like singing and dancing. We're all grown-ups now and it's definitely time for us to give her back those years of her hard work and patience. Thanks, ma! You're the best, love you! – **Diane Sy**

Raised by a 66-year-old single mom/widow, I can live without a husband and just have daughters! She taught me to love God with all your heart, soul and mind, and everything else would follow. She's a living testimony to that. I want to be as cool and amazing as she is. I love you forever, mama! – **Jasmin Mate, 24**



She taught me to always believe in myself, to do what I want but also be aware of the responsibilities that come along with it. – **Margaret Jade Ferriols, 31**

Whenever I'm scared, I hear my mom's voice. "Relax. Take a deep breath. Focus. Concentrate. Pray." I feel safer afterwards. – **Lara Tarranco, 23,** whose screen name is her mom's maiden name.

Every day, my ma teaches me by example how to see the best in others, and to treat people only with respect and kindness, regardless of who or what they are. – **Thea Aragon, 27**

Mothers love being mothers

Let these young mamas tell us why motherhood is such a fulfillment

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

MOTHERHOOD HAS GOT TO BE one of the most challenging jobs in the world, considering how a mother is on call any time, without any holiday or paycheck in return for her work.

There is, of course, a brighter, more wonderful side to being a mother. Let these young moms tell us why motherhood is such a fulfillment, Mother's Day or not.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

The affirmation of life. By taking part of that intricate 9-month affair with your child, a mother is acknowledging that in her own little way, she has contributed to the circle of life. And that is one of the best experiences any woman can ever have. Once your child is born, there is that unexplainable moment when your house becomes a blissful home. Your heart opens up to the whole world and your wisdom is at its unarguable truth. – **Abbey L. Valenciano, 26**

What's best about being a mom: every time I see my daughter growing up to become this beautiful person inside and out. Being able to support my family in their emotional, physical and spiritual needs. And knowing that I have a solid, strong and God-centered family. – **Jeyme Morallo**

I used to work at Shoemart as store manager, but because I love my kids, I sacrificed my career so I could spend more quality time with them and hone them in the best way possible. For me, the best thing about being a mom is the joy of seeing my kids grow up and the opportunity to love them unconditionally. – **Dulce Corazon B. Reducindo, 34**

After a long day's work, you ring the doorbell at your doorstep and from the inside, you hear your son scream with excitement, "Mommy!" And then you hear small footsteps hurrying towards you. You hear the knob turn and you see your son's beautiful, bright, smiling face. He opens his arms and says, "Hi Mommy!" What more can a mom ask for? – **Liza Faye Umali, 25, and son Israel Levi, 3**

The best thing about being a mom is realizing that I am already whole as a woman. My child was the missing part that has now made my life complete. – **Mary Ann A. Hona, 27**

The best thing about being a mom is the feeling of contentment and wonder that it gives you. You can't help but feel special about yourself because you know that part of what made your children who they are right now came from no one else but you. – **Frances Nadua, 22**

You wanted your name embedded in mine

By Maureen Tañedo
2bU! Correspondent

YOU WANTED YOUR NAME embedded in mine. "Melinda," you wanted to call me. "Melinda May," in particular.

It was unfortunately vetoed by Kongkong, who felt the name sounded like it belonged on the billboards of a red-light district. And so I got my Irish names Maureen Tracy from a nondescript baby book. Not a combination of your name and dad's, and no interesting name derivations for me.

Still, I always held the anecdote close to me, if only to remind myself that once upon a time, you wanted a lot to do with me. That once upon a time, I could have been your very own little Linda.

But I grew up, and things changed. I started to get a personality of my own. Little Maureen became instead little old lady, quietly sitting on Taima's burnt orange sofa set, watching TV with the oldies or reading a book or two. Little Linda was the hyperactive child who left her kindergarten class and played on the school playgrounds during class hours until she got tired.

Little Maureen instead became busybody Maureen, who, if she wasn't dipping her hand in important adult matters around the house, was carrying with her the deadly "S" for *sungit*, never forgetting to pout and say "*May S ako!*" to anyone who dared cross her.

THE AUTHOR and mother Linda at her university graduation this April

But little Linda was the cheerful little girl who sharpened all of her classmates' pencils until they were no more than an inch long, just to see what would become of the pencils... and of her classmates' helpless, forlorn faces.

It was clear I was far from becoming a little version of you.

You wanted your name embedded in mine. I grew up, but some things remained. I made choices for myself for as long as you allowed it. But always, I kept your pieces of advice close by.

Your validation

I don't always show it now, but I still seek validation from you. I've grown up and need to learn some things on my own, but still I will always come back to you.

When I think of unsung heroes, I think of you. I think of how you raised your three kids alone for over 15 years, making one sacrifice after another, putting our interests first and yours last. Now that all your three children have graduated and found jobs, it's your time to do the things you've always wanted to do while we map out our own paths.

It would have been the perfect beginning to a new chapter of our lives, but somehow, whoever wrote the story didn't get that memo. There's probably something in the air, but we have not been on the best of terms.

Last week, I went inside your room, wanting very much to reach out and clear the air. Instead you felt I was being defensive and I was just upsetting you. Your voice climbed several decibels higher, I tried explaining further, you felt offended, I cried, and then I left.

And so since then we've been pretending that nothing is wrong or, better yet, that nothing has happened at all.

It's been horrible for me, Mom. My friends know how much of my characteristic inner strength crumbles when we are not okay. I don't even have to tell them, Mom. They already know something's not right.

Today, this is probably the last thing you'd want to read. Today, I'm probably the last person you'd want to talk to. But today, I'm reaching out once more.

Happy Mother's Day, Mommy. Today, I'm celebrating you.

Objectifying Momma

By John Claude Pagdanganan
2bU! Correspondent

SHE'S PROBABLY THE closest person we'll ever have in our lives. It's amazing how this one person can assume different roles with finesse: counselor, cook, corporate slave, house nurse, etc.

She can achieve more than whatever Superwoman can do—thinking about work while changing her baby's diaper and going over the ingredients for tomorrow's breakfast, for instance.

She is Uberwoman. Or simply, Mom.

We asked people to think of an object that best represents their moms. Here are some of their responses:

My mum would be a triple tall latte because she keeps me up when I'm down. **–coffeeboy, 23, mama's boy for life**

My mom is like a stick of *yosi*. You just can't get enough. **–Maricris Berones, call-center agent**

She's my pacemaker because she keeps me alive. **–gentle gee, *magiging* doctor**

Mom is like Bob Ong's books. Unique and will keep you going. **–stanSTANstan**

If my mom were an object, she'd be a hammer covered in glittery pink wrapping paper and purple feathers, because she's really a tough mama hiding under the cover of girlish and whimsical fabulousness. **–brygirl21, the Rory part of our Gilmore Girls tandem**

My mom would definitely be a JBL speaker, because she keeps us awake when she starts giving us out-of-this-world litanies. **–scorcher, 25, loves mum mucha**

My mom would be chocolate, because all I have are sweet memories of her. **–Mazy Villaflor, soon to be married**

My mom is glue. She fixes you up after you've been broken down into tiny pieces. Hehe. **–Joey Opeña**

She'd be a cure for a debilitating, life-threatening sickness, because she is my cure-all, my placebo and the answer to my problems. **–etherealsoul, 24, her momma's li'l darling**

Moms' Day around the world

From page D1

much like how Filipinos do, with festive dinners or dining out with the whole family. Over the years, gifts sold during Mothers' Day have evolved and are no longer restricted to the traditional flowers, cards and chocolates.

INDIA. Mothers' Day is a very young holiday in vast and culturally diverse India. Hindus celebrate it for 10 days in a festival called Durga Puja. Durga is said to be the Hindu mother of all who protects people from evil.

SPAIN. This holiday is celebrated in a more religious way in Spain, as it was tied to December 8, the birthday of the Blessed Virgin. Children offer prayers and flowers to their mothers.

YUGOSLAVIA. Children would sneak into their parents' bedroom to surprise their mother. They would tie her up in bed while she is sleeping. When she wakes up, she would promise to give the children the gifts she has hidden, and then they'd untie her.

UK. More popularly known as "Mothering Day," this is often celebrated in England on the 4th Sunday of Lent to honor English mothers. A special cake called the "mothering cake," made with wheat grains boiled in sweet milk then sweetened and spiced, is given to moms.

Source: Wikipedia.com and www.Mothers.net

Heebie-jeebies as 'American Idol' takes on the Bee Gees

BLAKE, LAKISHA, MELINDA AND Jordin got mixed reviews when they took on the Bee Gees in last week's episode. Bee Gees frontman Barry Gibb was impressed during rehearsals, but the contestants faltered on the falsettos of the highly popular band's songs during their performances. We now know Lakisha paid the ultimate price for her performance, but some of our 2bU! readers beg to differ.

For their entries to the Star World-2bU! U B the Judge promo, Michael, Sheila and Anjelica all win special premium prizes from Star World and "American Idol." Congratulations, guys! To claim your prize, call Pilar Cinderella Corrales at 8937472-73.

You, too, can win exciting prizes from the world's biggest singing competition! Catch "American Idol" tonight at 6 p.m. live via satellite (or 8 p.m. primetime and 11:30 p.m.) on Star World. Give us your name and contact details, comment on the finalists' performance, styling, song choice, audience impact, and even fashion in five sentences or less and e-mail to starworld.ph@gmail.com.

Here's what our winning trio thought of "American Idol's" tribute to the Bee Gees:

BLAKE Lewis

MELINDA Doolittle

Michael B. Malabuyo

So far, this must be the most difficult theme for this season's "American Idol"—the Bee Gees' high falsetto songs. Each of the Top 4 contestants had to dish out two songs and, sadly, nobody delivered a one-two-punch performance. Blake and Lakisha struggled in their renditions. Jordin sparkled in the first round of the competition and Melinda did not do a little to nail the song in the second round.

Sheila Millette R. Navarro

Jordin Sparks is such a matinee idol. She is an amazing performer with a sense of humor and unique style when she sang the song "To Love Somebody." She and Blake did so well last Wednesday. Blake Lewis isn't only just a good beatboxer but also a certified pop superstar. Every time Blake performs, he gives it his all to impress the judges as well as the audiences. His songs are always enjoyable. Blake Lewis deserves to be the next American Idol.

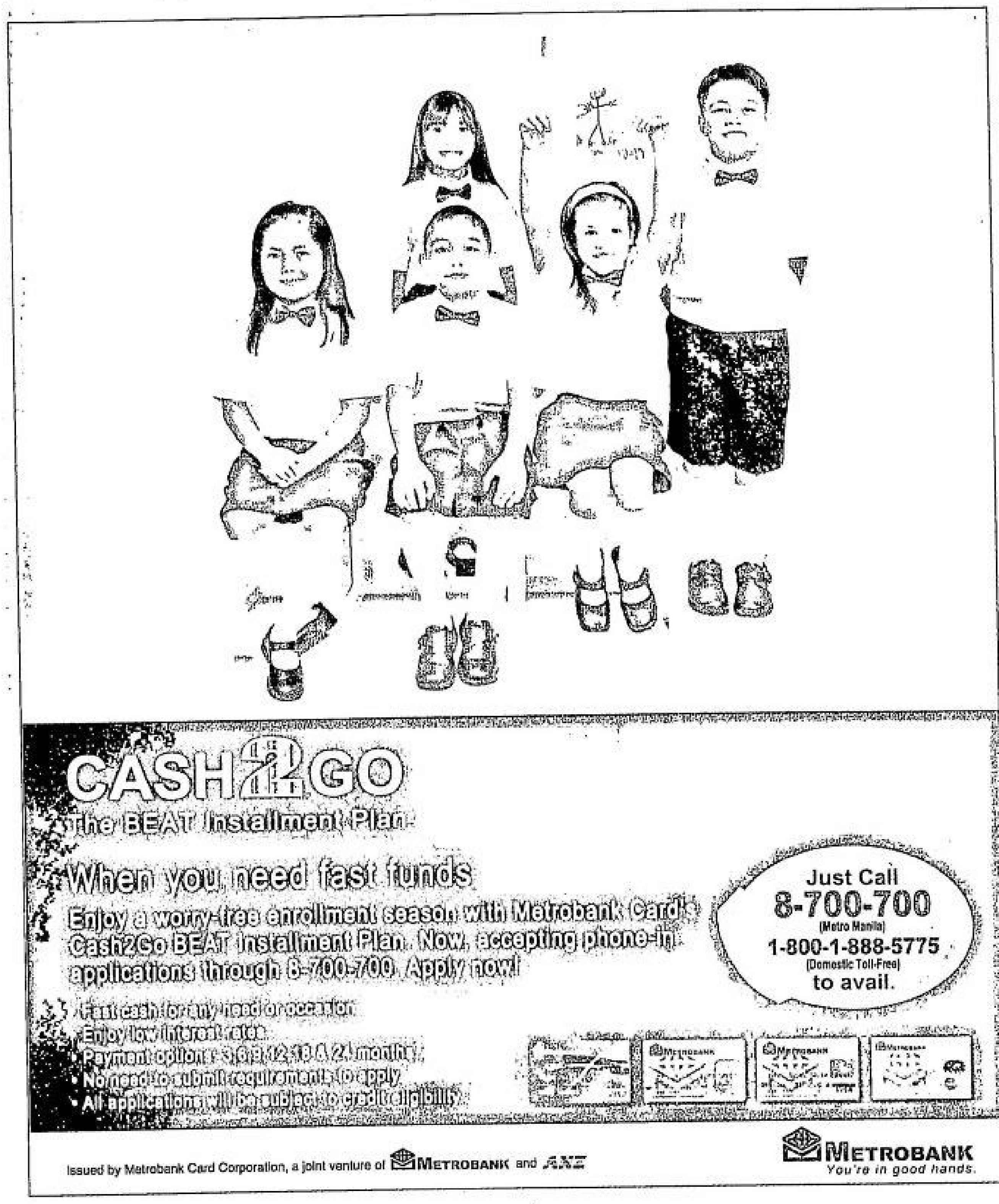
Anjelica Alcala

Melinda's performances were good, but did not move me. Lakisha's "Stayin Alive" was the most entertaining of the night, but did not have the best vocals. I loved Jordin's rendition of "To Love Somebody" and I give credit to her for singing a Barbara Streisand original despite her singing some parts off-key.

And Blake? I love Blake, but this was just a bad night for him. His beatboxing in "You Should Be Dancing" just didn't work for me. And while he was able to redeem himself in his second song, I felt that he didn't perform it as much as he could have. I still love him though... and his black hair with or without the streaks.

Oh, and in case you were wondering, I want to see a Blake-Jordin finale. Blake for the win of course. Cheers!

JORDIN Sparks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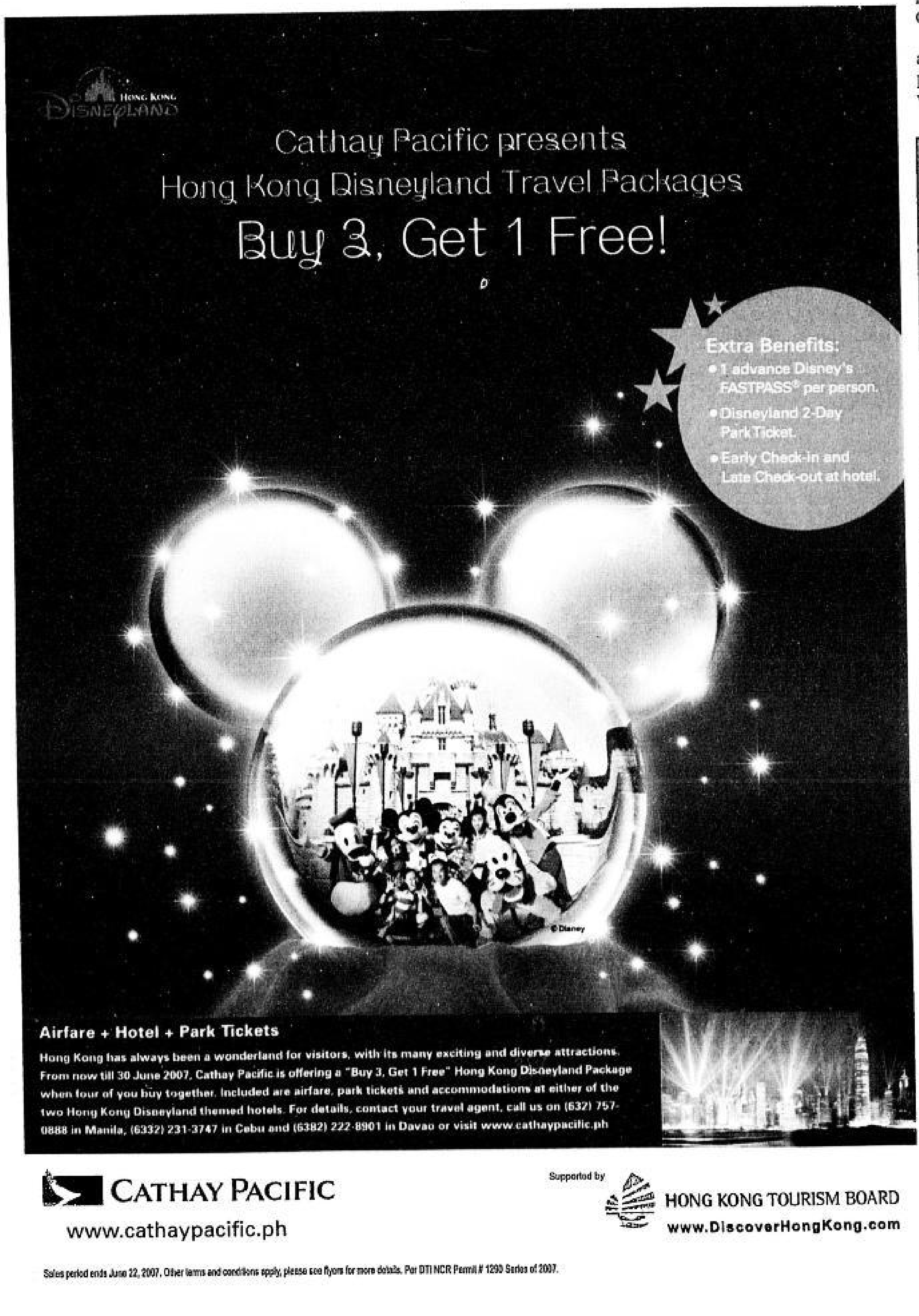
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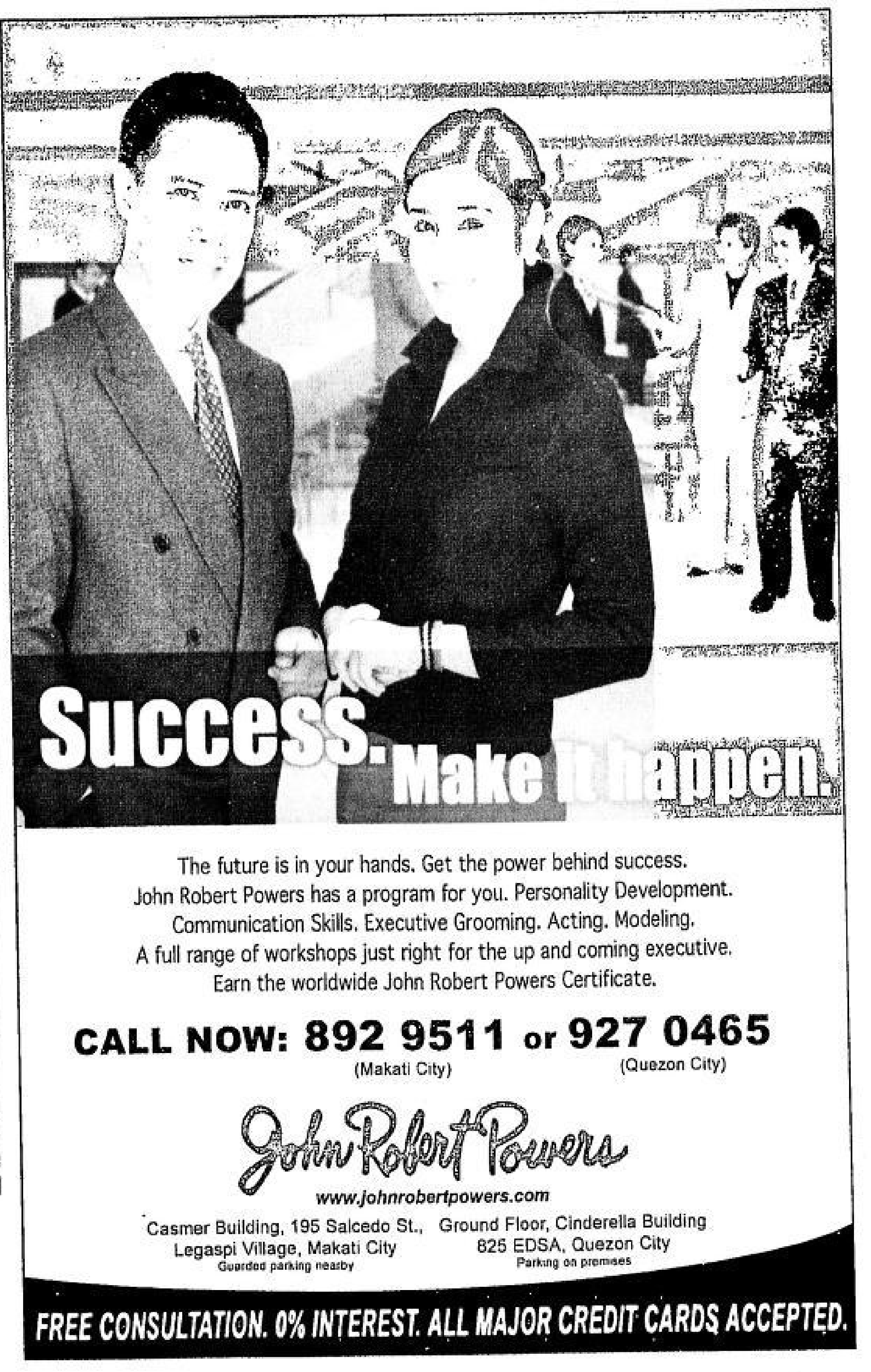
Orders will be specially delivered by www.RegaloService.com. GKoncepts has become a channel of empowerment for Gawad Kalinga beneficiaries. It has given those in need the special and priceless gift of dignified living.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RUFFA Gutierrez and her mother-manager Annabelle Rama RUDY ESPERAS

What Annabelle, Ruffa cannot say on nat'l TV

AFTER RUFFA GUTIERREZ-Bektas' interview on ABS-CBN's "The Buzz" by host Boy Abunda on Sunday, her husband Yilmaz phoned her. This is according to Abunda, who believes the couple are "still very much in love" but are "being careful."

How to explain then, the bitterness in Ruffa's earlier declaration that she was seeking annulment of her four-year marriage to the Turkish businessman, and then the perplexing, sometimes contradicting, words over the weekend from Ruffa and her mother Annabelle Rama—hurled mostly at a very intrigued public via two weekend show biz talk programs—only days after they announced that that no more statements would be issued on the matter?

Not to mention a miffed Yilmaz's e-mailed message to GMA 7's "Star Talk" on Saturday citing "mutual psychological … physical violence."

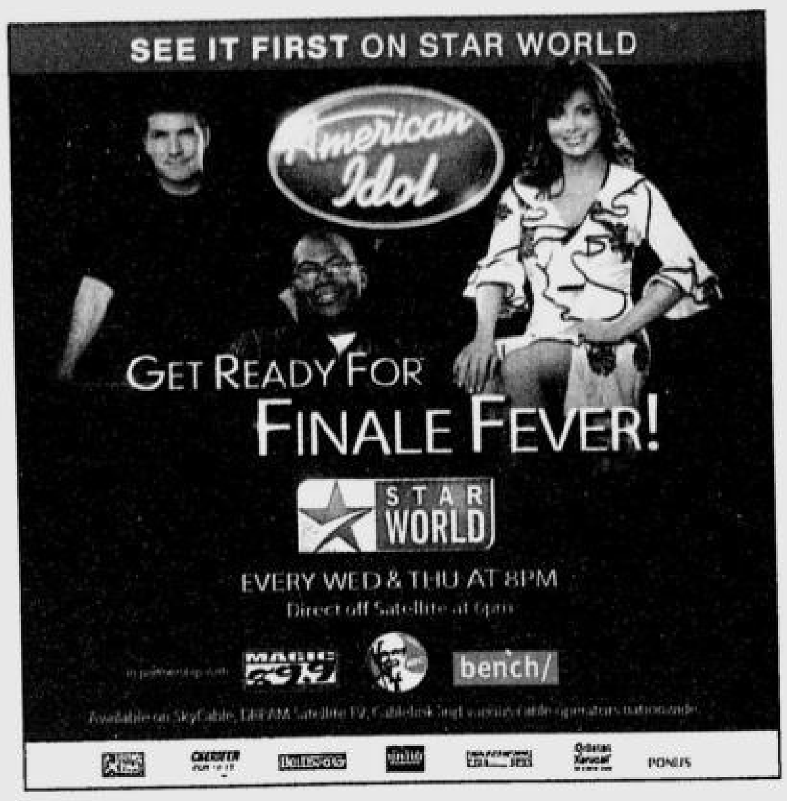
Ruffa on "The Buzz" and Annabelle on Ch 7's "Showbiz Central" wouldn't categorically confirm or deny spousal abuse in the Bektas marriage, but they more than hinted at it.

Annabelle: "*Walang* Philippine embassy *sa* Istanbul … *baka katayin siya doon*. (She could get slaughtered there.)"

Ruffa: "The Philippines is my home. I feel safe here."

Asked pointblank by Abunda whether she was a battered wife, Ruffa turned from calm to tearful: "*Hindi ko na kaya* (I can't take any more)." To the same question about her daughter,

WHAT/ E2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What Annabelle . . .

From page E1

Annabelle's reply was evasive at best: *"Delikado 'yan* (That's a delicate subject)."

At one point, Ruffa said her mother had supported her marriage from the start. Annabelle had a different take: She didn't like Yilmaz in the beginning. "He was so quiet. He didn't speak English. How could we converse?"

The buildup from the news break on Tuesday last week to the Sunday TV exclusives was such, that public appetite had been amply whetted. After the telecasts, jaded viewers' verdict was: *"Bitin ."* Lacking in detail. The last time a show biz story hogged the weekend talkies was when James Yap and Kris

WHAT/ E4

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MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN 3
2 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN 3
3 (DOLBY) 28 WEEKS LATER
4 (DOLBY) LUCKY YOU

PREMIERE
(DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN 3

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 SPIDER-MAN-3
2 SPIDER-MAN-3
3 28 WEEKS LATER
4 CONDEMNED

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268150
3 SPIDER-MAN-3
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) CONDEMNED
5 RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504265, 5433994
1 THE SHOOTER
2 SPIDER-MAN-3
3 SPIDER-MAN-3
4 28 WEEKS LATER

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan
Telephone No. (044) 600 5025
1 SPIDER-MAN-3
2 SPIDER-MAN-3
3 SUNSHINE

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6271
1 SPIDER-MAN-3
2 SPIDER-MAN-3
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DTS) SPIDER-MAN-3
2 (SDDS) SPIDER-MAN-3
3 (DTS) SPIDER-MAN-3
4 GOLD (DTS) 28 WEEKS LATER
5 GOLD (DOLBY) THE CONDEMNED
6 GOLD (SDDS) SPIDER-MAN-3
7 GOLD (DOLBY) LUCKY YOU
8 [illegible] THE REAPING
9 [illegible] WILD HOGS
10 [illegible] PERFECT STRANGER

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) THE CONDEMNED
2 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN-3
3 (DOLBY) 28 WEEKS LATER
4 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN-3

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN-3
2 SPIDER-MAN-3
3 28 WEEKS LATER
4 LUCKY YOU
5 THE CONDEMNED

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 ZOMBIES
2 SPIDER-MAN-3
3 SPIDER-MAN-3
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 SPIDER-MAN-3
2 SPIDER-MAN-3
3 PAN'S LABYRINTH

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 SPIDER-MAN-3
2 SPIDER-MAN-3

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) SPIDER-MAN-3
2 SPIDER-MAN-3
3 (DTS EX) THE CHANTING
4 SPIDER-MAN-3

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 SPIDER-MAN-3
2 SPIDER-MAN-3

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1 (DOLBY) LUCKY YOU
2 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN-3
3 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN-3
4 (DOLBY) 28 WEEKS LATER

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 SUNSHINE
2 (DTS) SPIDER-MAN-3
3 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN-3
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 (DOLBY) RESERVED
3 (DTS) RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 SPIDER-MAN-3
2 TURISTAS
3 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN-3

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
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1 ROCKY BALBOA
2 THE CHANTING
3 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN-3
4 (DTS) SPIDER-MAN-3

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(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 SPIDER-MAN-3
2 THE REAPING
3 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN-3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 SPIDER-MAN-3
2 SPIDER-MAN-3

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
2 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) SPIDER-MAN-3
2 MASAHISTA
3 BIGLANG LIKO
4 (DTS) RUMBLE BOYS

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) SPIDER-MAN-3
2 BASA SA DAGAT
3 (DTS) SUNSHINE
4 KATAS
5 SATANICA

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 PICK UP GIRL
2 SPIDER-MAN-3
3 SUNSHINE
4 SPIDER-MAN-3

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
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2 SATANICA

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P200Guaranteed Seats	P150 Guaranteed Seats	P120 Guaranteed Seats

METRO MANILA

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12:30PM 3:30PM 6:30PM 9:30PM
Admission Prices: P 300
(Before 5 p.m., Mon-Thu)
P 350 (After 5 p.m., Mon-Thu; Whole Day, Fri-Sun, Holidays)
T-REX
11:30AM Admission Prices: P 200
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SHREK 3
4 SHREK 3
5 FRACTURE
6 WHISPER
PREMIERE CINEMA
SPIDER-MAN 3
CENTERSTAGE
SPIDER-MAN 3
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
SPIDER-MAN 3
CINEMA 2
SHREK 3
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 WHISPER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3/ SHREK
5 FRACTURE
6 SPIDER-MAN 3/ SHREK
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SPIDER-MAN 3
9 28 WEEKS LATER
10 CONDEMNED
11 SPIDER-MAN 3
12 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 SHREK 3
2 28 WEEKS LATER
3 SHREK 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 FRACTURE
7 LUCKY YOU
8 CONDEMNED
9 WHISPER
10 SPIDER-MAN 3
11 SPIDER-MAN 3
12 THE SHOOTER

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 FRACTURE
2 28 WEEKS LATER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SHREK 3
6 CONDEMNED
7 SHREK 3
8 WHISPER
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 SPIDER-MAN 3
11 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
12 LUCKY YOU

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 FRACTURE
3 SHREK 3
4 SHREK 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
7 28 WEEKS LATER
8 LUCKY YOU
9 WHISPER
10 CONDEMNED

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 SPIDER-MAN 3/ SHREK
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 CONDEMNED
4 WHISPER
5 FRACTURE
6 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 SHREK 3
2 FRACTURE
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 28 WEEKS LATER
7 CONDEMNED
8 WHISPER
9 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 SHREK 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 WHISPER
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 SHREK 3
2 WHISPER
3 FRACTURE
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SHREK 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SPIDER-MAN 3
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 CONDEMNED
11 28 WEEKS LATER
12 LUCKY YOU

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 WHISPER
3 PERFECT STRANGER
4 SHREK 3

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 SHREK 3
2 WHISPER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 28 WEEKS LATER

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 SPIDER-MAN 3/ SHREK 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 WHISPER

SHREK 3
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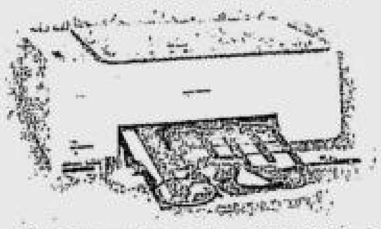

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1 CONDEMNED
2 WHISPER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 FRACTURE
8 28 WEEKS LATER

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 PERFECT STRANGER
4 WHISPER
5 THE SHOOTER
6 FIREHOUSE DOG

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1 SHREK 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 WHISPER
4 THE SHOOTER

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 PERFECT STRANGER
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 THE REAPING
4 PREMONITION

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 PAN'S LABYRINTH
3 FIREHOUSE DOG
4 PERFECT STRANGER
5 WHISPER
6 THE SHOOTER

SM CIY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 THE SHOOTER
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 THE REAPING

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SUNSHINE
4 PREMONITION

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 WHISPER
3 SUNSHINE
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 SHREK 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 CONDEMNED
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 WHISPER
4 SHREK 3

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 PERFECT STRANGER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 WHISPER
6 SHREK 3

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3 PREMONITION
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

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3 SPIDER-MAN 3
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7 RESERVED
8 RUMBLE BOYS

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
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6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 PAN'S LABYRINTH
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2 THE SHOOTER
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4 SPIDER-MAN 3

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FRACTURE	SHREK 3 G	SHREK 3 G
SHREK 3	WHISPER R13	SPIDER-MAN 3 G

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SHANG CINEPLEX

① SHREK 3
MTRCB GP
3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00

② SHREK 3
MTRCB GP
2:00, 4:10, 6:20, 8:30

③ SPIDER-MAN 3
MTRCB GP
1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30

④ FRACTURE
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

PREMIERE THEATRE SHREK 3 (GP)
2:30, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00

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CINEMA 4 SPIDERMAN 3 GP
CINEMA 5 SHREK 03 GP

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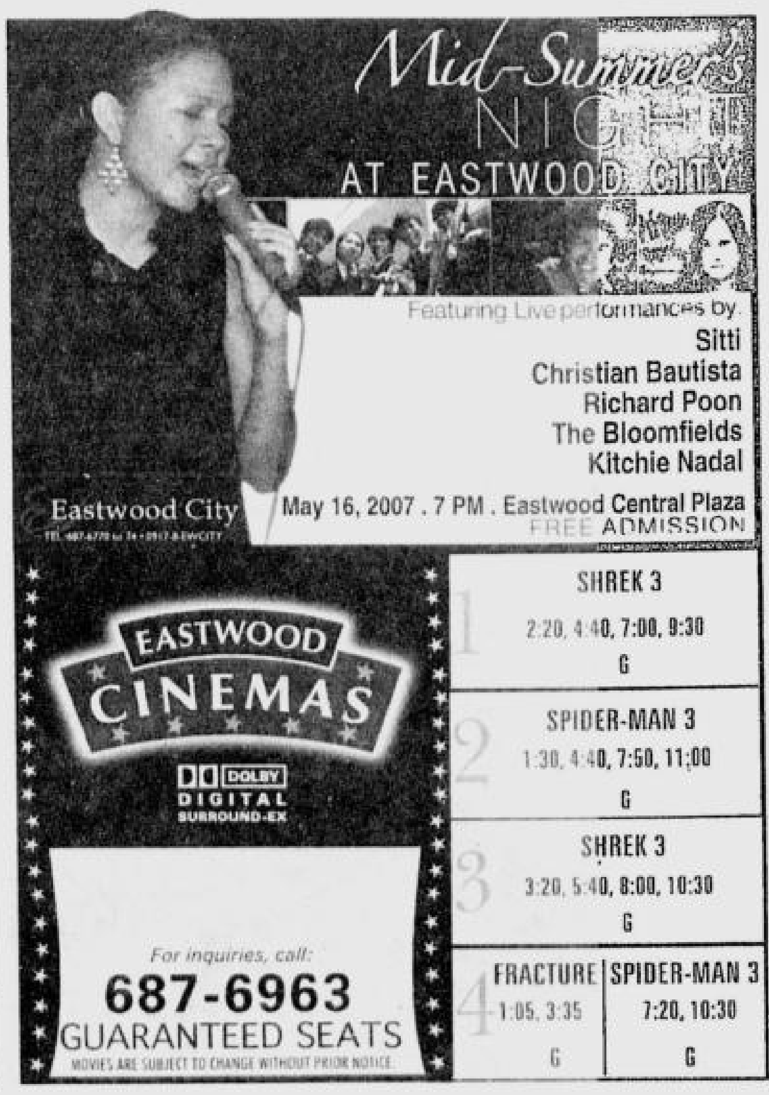
MUSIC MUSEUM

May 18 , 2007	CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA	8:00 PM
May 19 & 26 , 2007	OGIE ALCASID & SITTI	8:00 PM
June 15 & 16 , 2007	Rico J. Puno & Mitch Valdez	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
May 19 , 2007	DAVE ELQUERO in Bossa Breeze w/ MYMP	7:30 PM
May 31 , 2007	RJ Jimenez	8:30 PM
May 11 , 18 , 25 , 2007	Drag - Ons	9:00 PM
JUNE 15 , 2007	Champion of the World (Jed Madela)	8:30 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116



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1 SHREK 3
2:20, 4:40, 7:00, 9:30
G

2 SPIDER-MAN 3
1:30, 4:40, 7:50, 11:00
G

3 SHREK 3
3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:30
G

4 FRACTURE
1:05, 3:35
G
SPIDER-MAN 3
7:20, 10:30
G

RPN 9, ABC 5 shows in 'transition'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE RECENTLY launched local shows of RPN 9 are reportedly on the chopping block.

Mia Concio, president and chief executive officer of RPN 9, told INQUIRER Entertainment: "These shows will be evaluated based on sales and ratings. We will see after the end of the first season."

Among the new programs to be reviewed are "Sabi ni Nanay," starring Dennis Padilla; "Showbiz Ka," hosted by Pat-P Daza; "Kemis (Ke Misis Umaasa)," with Bayani Agbayani; "Dalawang Tisoy," top-billed by Eddie Gutierrez and Freddie Webb; and "Philippines' Next Top Model," anchored by Ruffa Gutierrez.

New shows

This was confirmed by Wilson Tieng, president of Solar, RPN 9's co-producer: "Some shows will be renewed; some will not be renewed. The results of the evaluation will be released after the election, within the week. Some of the new shows just concluded their first seasons."

One season consists of 13 episodes, Tieng explained.

Concio added that new local shows had been launched on the 10:30 p.m. time slot: "GP (Going Public)," "Date with an Angel" and "K Ka Lang."

"'Sabado Boys' and 'Go Negosyo Big Time' complete the 10:30 Hip Strip," Concio said.

Delayed launch

Meanwhile, the launch of the second season of "Philippine Idol" on ABC 5 had been delayed.

Perci Intalan, vice president for creative and entertainment production of ABC 5, told INQUIRER Entertainment that "nothing is final, but we definitely won't make it in time for a June-July launch like last year. Hopefully, we can launch within the year."

Although there is no definite launch date yet, ABC 5 is "still in talks with FremantleMedia, the 'Idol' franchise holder, regarding the contract and other production details."

The same is true with "Slingo," a new program based on an online game that ABC 5 is co-producing with US-Philippine firm Mojo Pacific. "We're still in discussion at the moment," said Intalan.

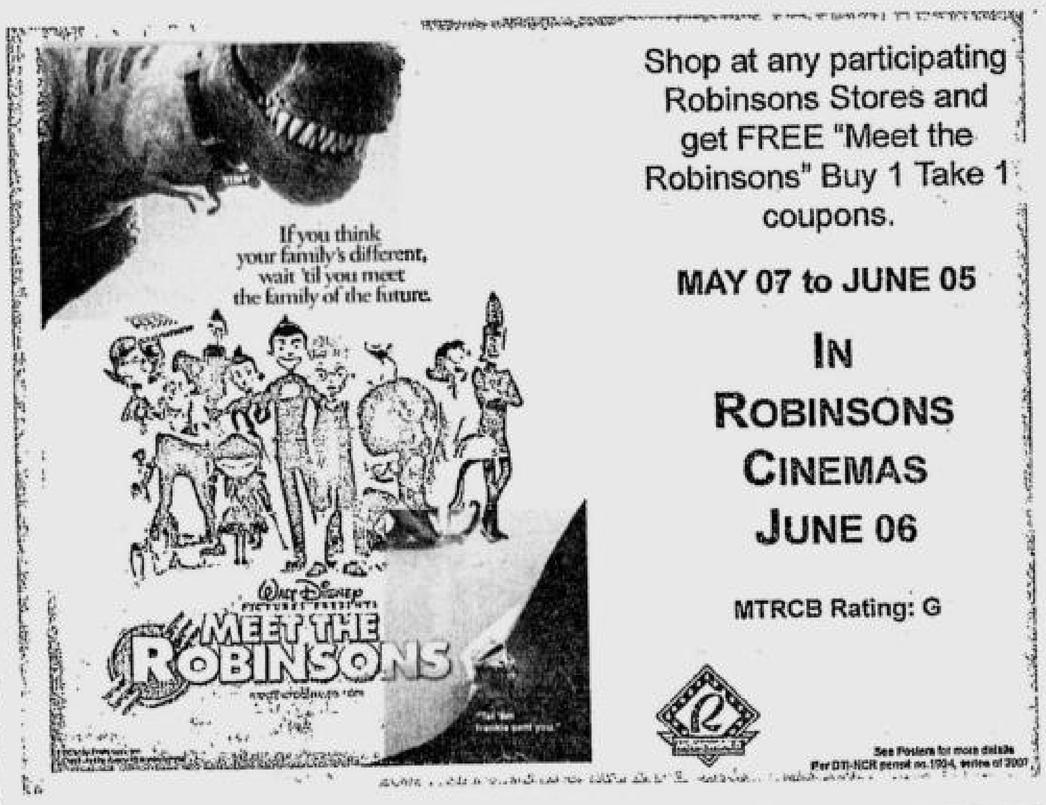
DID YOU KNOW...

Kung fu myth

HONG KONG—Aspiring action stars don't have to crack heads in kung fu to make it big.

Jackie Chan, who has been canvassing applicants to his new Chinese talent TV show, "The Disciple," said in a blog entry on his website Monday that he's looking for grace in movement, be it from sports, dance or kung fu.

AP



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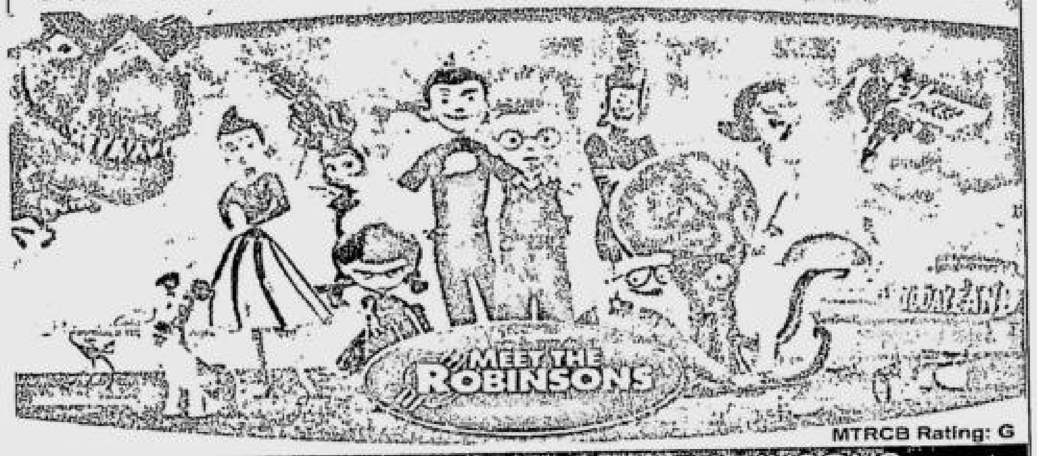

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What Annabelle, Ruffa cannot say . . .

From page E2

Aquino bickered about a girl named Hope. *That* was far from *bitin.*

There was a little fire on Sunday, but mostly it was unexplained hysterics. Inq.Net reported the next day: "Annabelle confirmed that Yilmaz was incensed that she had not allowed Ruffa to return to Istanbul since [her daughter] arrived in the Philippines in November [to host the TV show] 'Philippines Next Top Model.'"

The report continued: "After Pia [Guanio, 'Showbiz Central' segment host] wrapped up the interview and cohost Raymond Gutierrez (Ruffa's brother) approached [his mother] to comfort her, Annabelle, fiery defender of the Gutierrez siblings broke down. 'Ruffa, *parang awa mo na, huwag mong balikan si* (have mercy, don't go back to) Yilmaz,' she said, weeping."

Why couldn't Ruffa or Annabelle—both famously articulate and intrepid—say more than they did?

YILMAZ BEKTAS

Women's rights lawyer Katrina Legarda told INQUIRER Entertainment that the couple "might be trying to reconcile."

Legarda added: "Second, they are probably set to discuss things concerning their children (Lorin, 3, and Venice, 2). This is actually one of their biggest problems." Third, she said, it seemed Ruffa and Annabelle hadn't consulted a lawyer and were unsure of what to say. Fourth, Ruffa, who had converted to Islam for Yilmaz, was covered by the Shari'a (Arabic for Islamic Law) and was maybe not sure where she stood. The Shari'a is very specific about civil status, Legarda explained. "It is obeyed by all Muslims, wherever they're staying."

From www.expertlaw.com: "Shari'a ... provisions set forth rules regarding marriage, divorce, child custody, and many other matters of family ... Although a number of Islamic countries have revised their legal systems to incorporate other secular systems, Shari'a continues to influence and shape the family laws of many such nations."

From Wikipedia: "[Under Muslim Law], a woman who wishes to be divorced usually needs the consent of her husband ... Men have the right of unilateral divorce. These are guidelines; Islamic law on divorce is different depending on the school of thought."

Legarda recalled a case similar to the Bektases': "The woman is a less-known actress/model. She married this man and converted to Islam. Later, she claimed, he beat her. Under the Shari'a Law, she lost custody of her children. But when she re-converted back to Catholicism and went under the Civil Code, she got the children back."

The way lawyer Gaby Concepcion, host of the legal segment "Kapuso sa Batas" in GMA 7's "Unang Hirit," sees it, nothing should keep Ruffa or Yilmaz—and, by extension, Annabelle as Ruffa's business manager—from saying anything at this time, "except good manners and right conduct." That's because no case has been filed, Concepcion said.

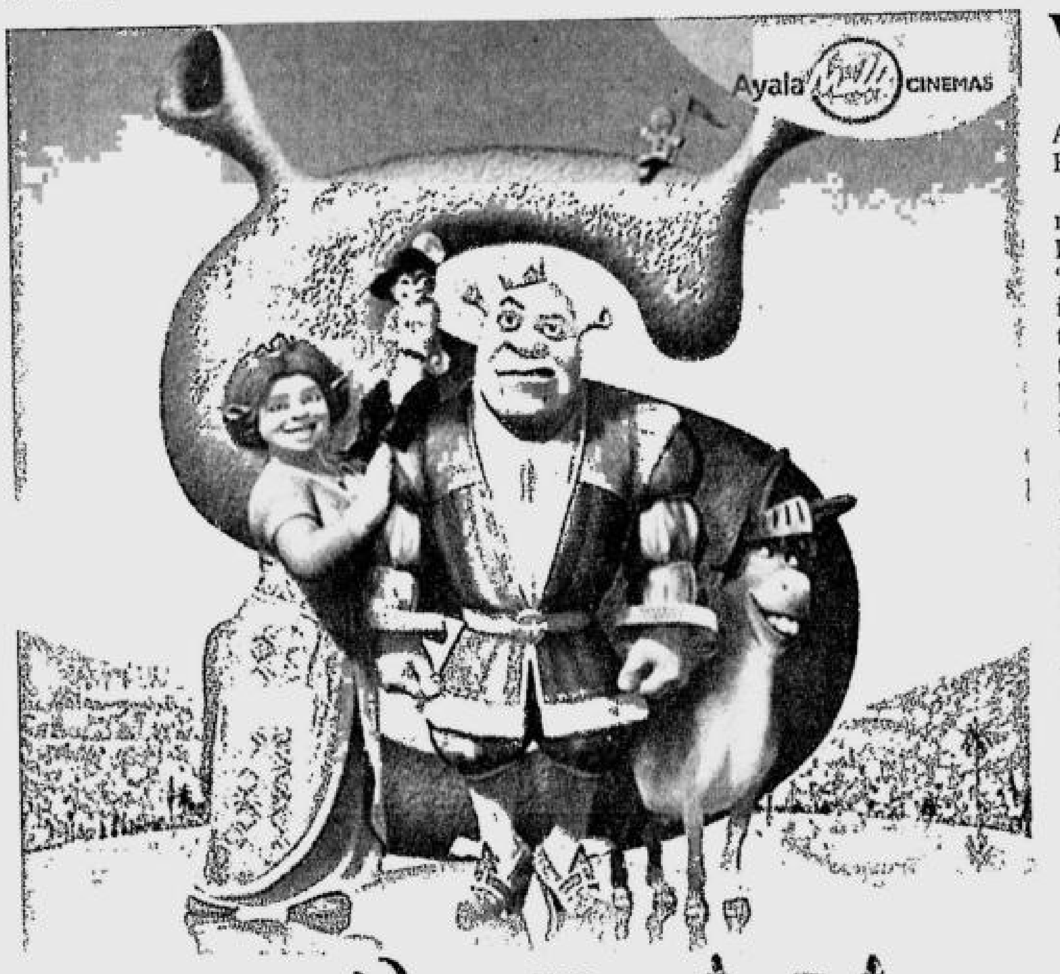
Up to what point could one talk decently about one's ex-spouse in this situation? Concepcion told INQUIRER Entertainment, "It's best to couch [every] statement in general terms."

Besides, she noted, "If [the parties] talk too much too soon, discrepancies may emerge later, in court." As for the settlement process, Concepcion said, "It's advisable to be very diplomatic, given the other big issues, like property, and especially custody of the kids."

Ruffa's call

The militant woman's group Gabriela believes it's Ruffa's call. Lana Libanan, Gabriela deputy secretary general, explained, addressing all Filipinas experiencing conflict in cross-cultural mar-

WHAT/E5



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GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 2 - 3:00 PM, 5:10, 7:20, 9:30

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 2** - 3:45 PM, 5:50, 8:00, 10:00
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Cinema 7** - 3:50 PM, 6:00, 8:10, 10:20

GREENBELT 1
Cinema 2 - 2:00 PM, 4:10, 6:20, 8:30

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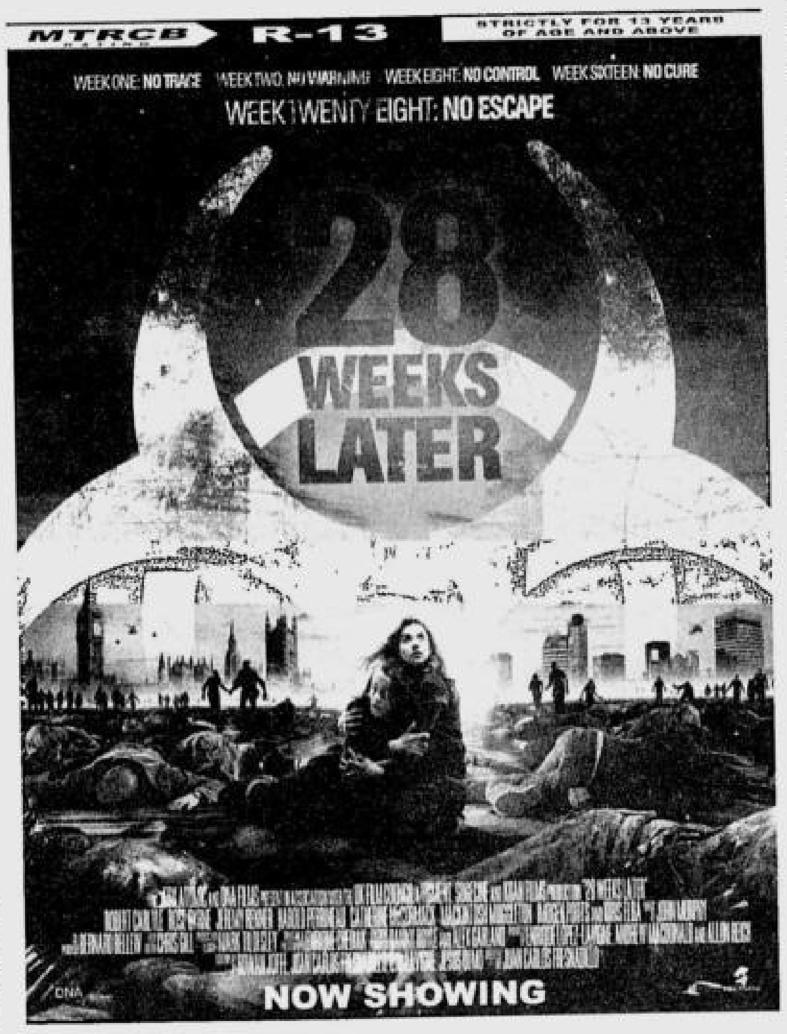
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GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	28 WEEKS LATER GUARANTEED SEATS	LUCKY YOU GUARANTEED SEATS	SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS		
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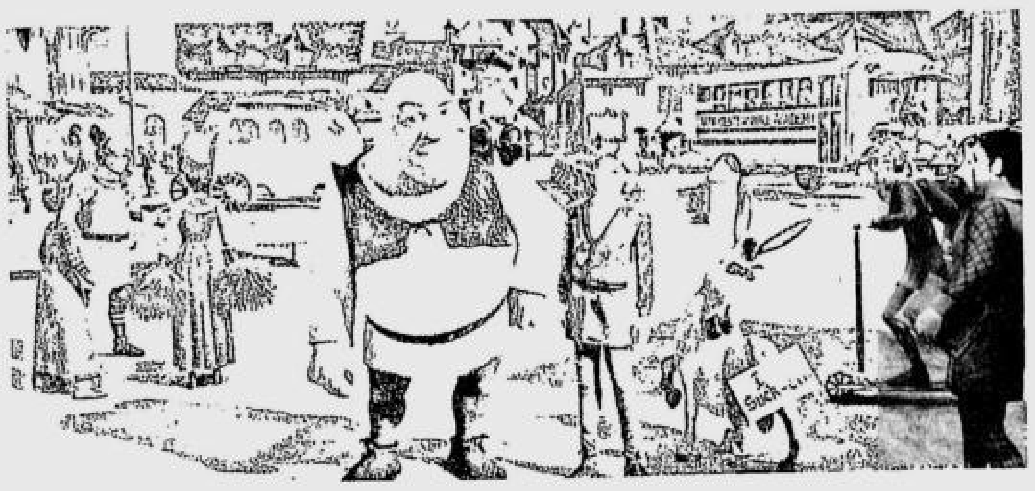


Fracture

Stars Anthony Hopkins, Ryan Gosling, David Strathairn, Rosamund Pike, Billy Burke

Directed by Gregory Hoblit

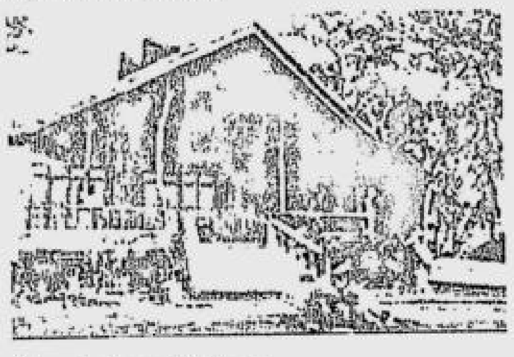
A wealthy engineer (Hopkins) is accused of murdering his wife. He's poised to get away with it—if not for a lawyer (Gosling) who's determined to prove his guilt. Justin Chang of Variety calls it a "smooth, proficient but curiously bloodless entertainment to which older viewers will raise few objections ..." New York Post's Lou Lumenick describes it as "a slickly entertaining package, beautifully photographed, with an unerring sense of pace." Manohla Dargis of New York Times says "there are a few loose ends ... but [this] isn't a movie about ideas; it's about slick surfaces."

Shrek the Third

With the voices of Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy, Cameron Diaz, Julie Andrews, Antonio Banderas, Justin Timberlake

Directed by Chris Miller, Raman Hui

The green ogre ends up as the king of Far Far Away, after his wife Fiona's father dies. Reluctant to rule, he embarks on a quest to find a suitable replacement. The Oscar Guy site thinks that "with a plethora of interesting pop-culture references and fairy-tale twisting... [this] should be every bit as funny as 'Shrek 2.'" Joshua Tyler of cinemablend.com explains that "Shrek movies are topical ... a product of whatever is current in pop culture and comedy, blended into a big swampy bowl." WorstPreviews.com comments: "Sooner or later, every franchise overstays its welcome. It's now pandering to the audience rather than amusing and challenging it."

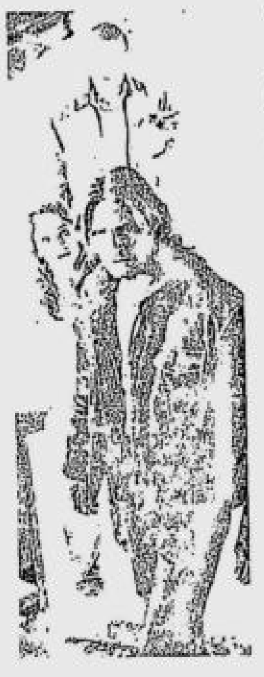


Sandalang Bahay

Stars Albert Martinez, Adriana Agcaoili, Nonie Buencamino, Shamaine Buencamino, Mads Nicolas

Directed by Mark Gary

Described as a "gothic story about memory and forgiveness, loss and regret," this digital movie was an entry in the first Cinema One Originals film fest. It was later screened in different festivals abroad, including Singapore, Newport Beach and Fribourg. Gibbs Cadiz of the INQUIRER opines that "a minimalist aesthetic pervades in this movie ... [which] finds its spine in the complex performances of its four female leads, all theater veterans ... crisp female drama." Ophellia San Juan of the INQUIRER states that its "story treatment and character portrayals mimic real life." Exclusively in IndieSine Robinsons Galleria.



Whisper

Stars Josh Holloway, Blake Woodruff, Joel Edgerton, Dulé Hill

Directed by Stewart Hendler

Four kidnappers get more than what they've bargained for when their 8-year-old victim turns out to be otherworldly. Soon enough, the criminals turn against each other, as if manipulated by an evil force. Its tagline says it all: "The devil's work is child's play." Holloway, star of the TV series "Lost," makes his feature film debut in this supernatural thriller formerly entitled "Hellion." Holloway explains that once again he is playing "a bad person with a good heart." Does he see himself crossing over to the big screen with this movie? "That's tough. I compare it to burning through the atmosphere and that's hard."

What Annabelle . . .

From page E4

riages: "If you feel violated inside a relationship, you have the right to speak up and defend yourself. If Ruffa's decision is to discontinue her relationship with her husband, that's her right. No religion gives a man the license to hurt his partner... or anybody."

Curiously enough, among those least convinced that the high-profile squabble could lead to annulment or divorce are Ruffa's pals.

But one friend recalls a cry for help: "She called me one night, crying. There were signs of the battered-wife syndrome. She would laugh one minute, claiming she was strong and equal to the problem, then cry again."

Concepcion drew up a possible scenario: "If a case is filed, a gag order can be issued by the court since this case could potentially revolve around RA 9262—which defines violence against women and children. Yilmaz can be covered by Philippine law, but unless he's on Philippine soil, the law cannot be enforced. For her part, if Ruffa wants to retrieve properties in Turkey, she will have to go there."

The biggest problem that hasn't escaped Annabelle is not with Yilmaz, though. On "Showbiz Central" last Sunday, she blurted it out: "Ruffa keeps changing her mind."

Reports from Bayani San Diego Jr. and Marinel R. Cruz

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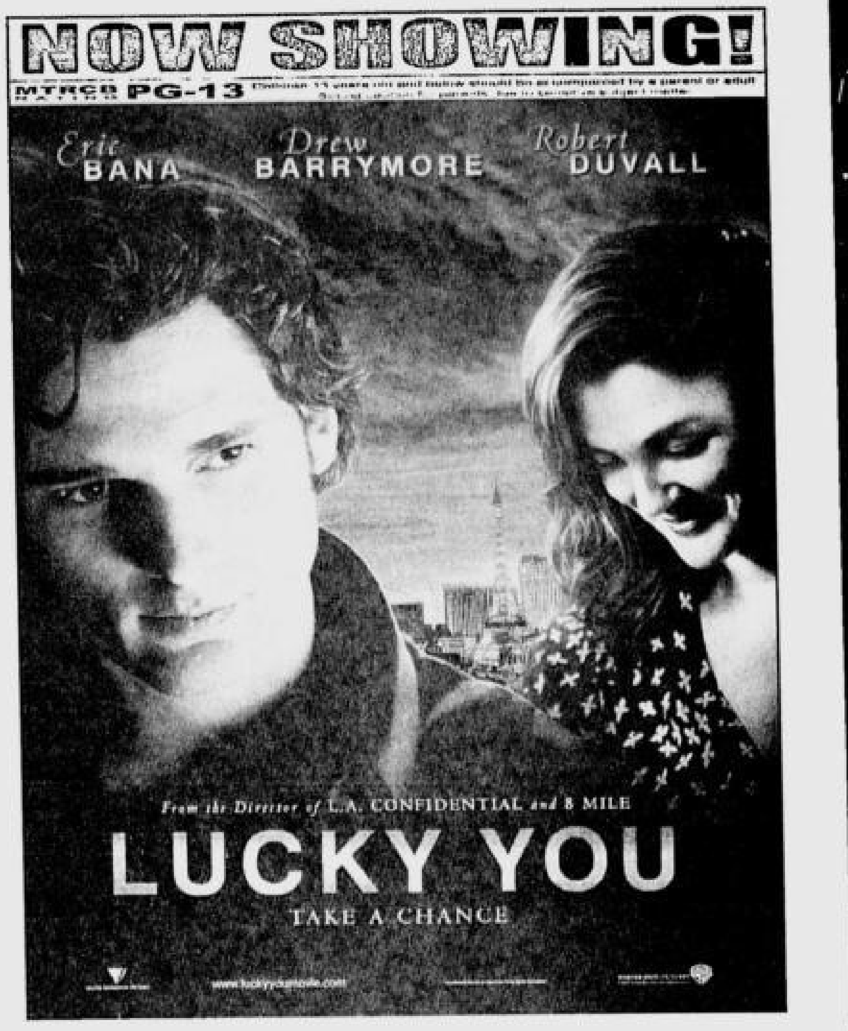
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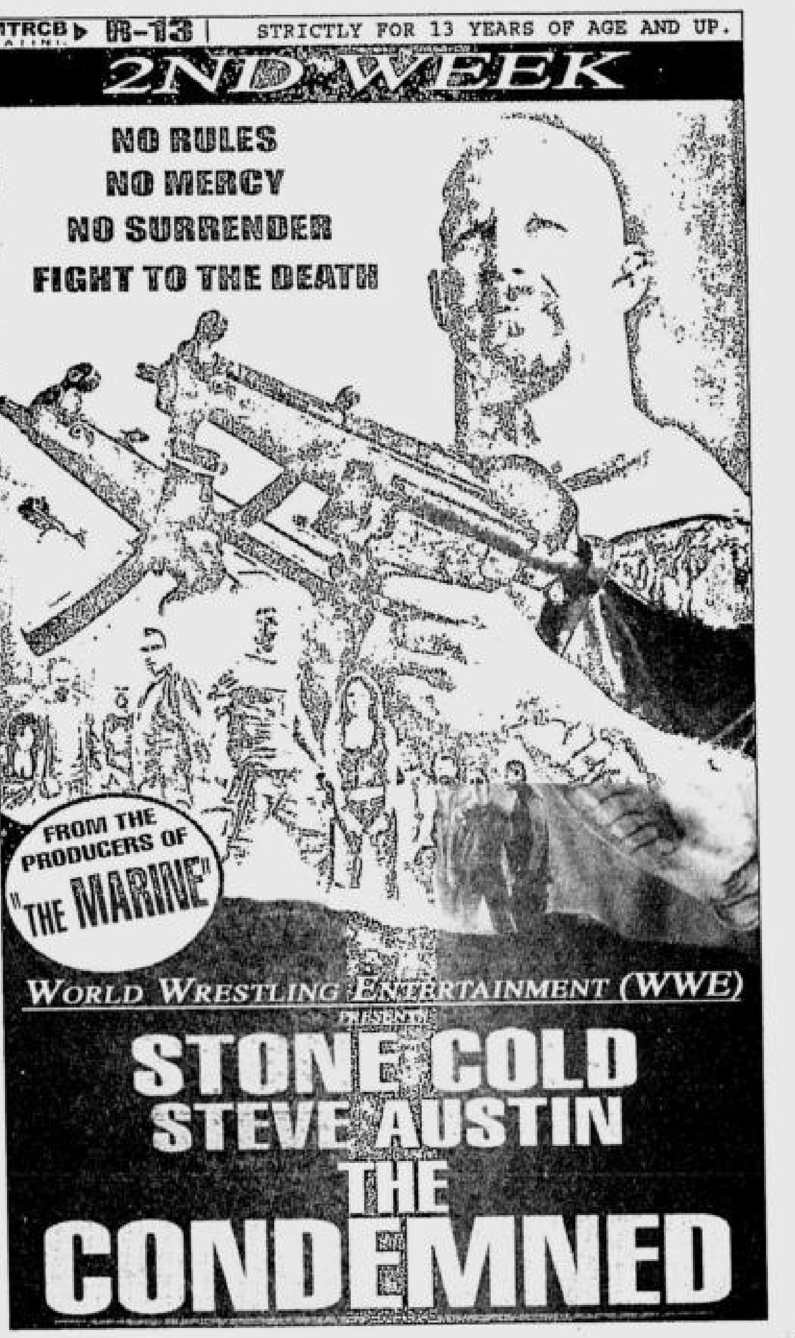
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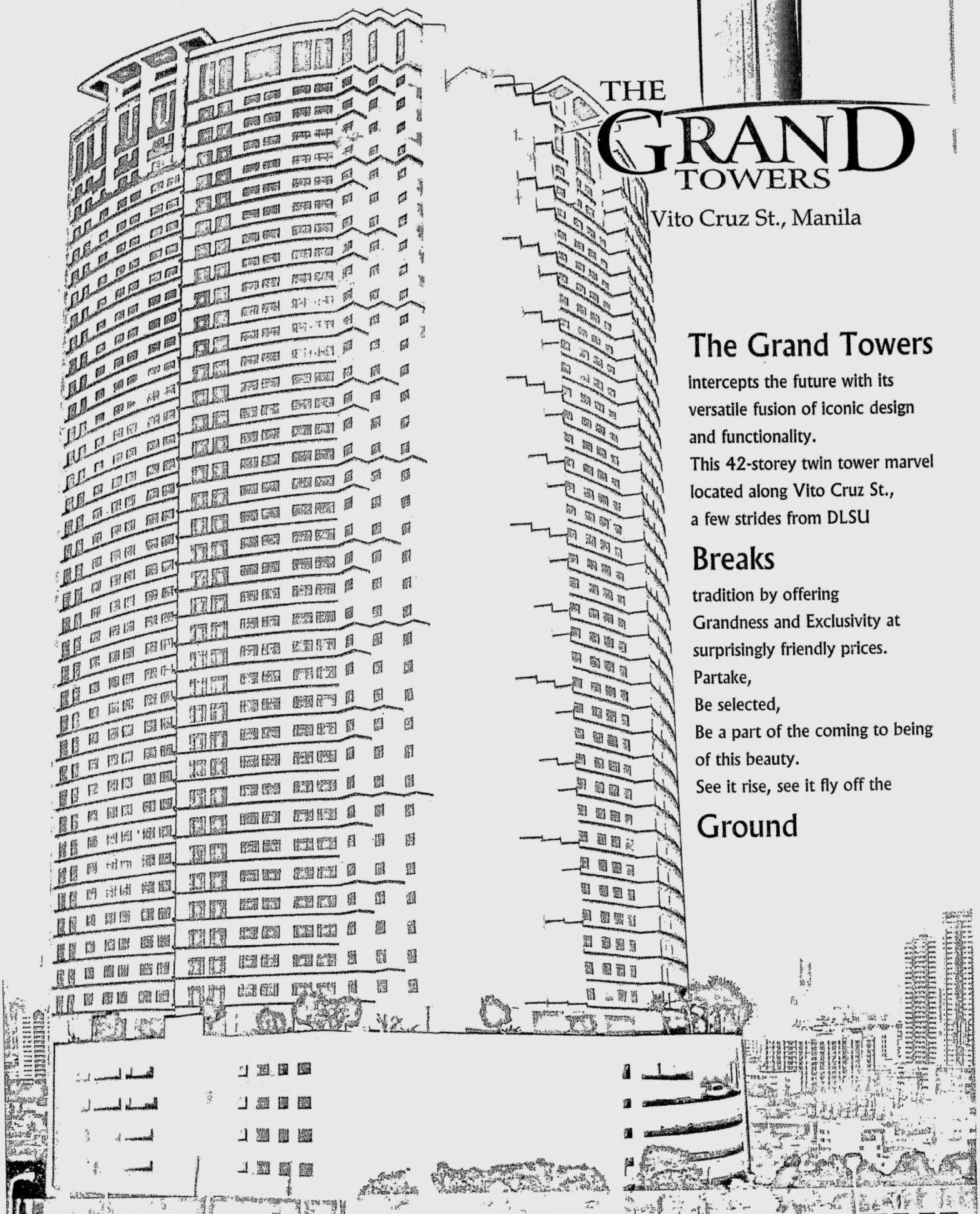

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